Domestic Girlfriend

14

KEI SASUGA

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14

DOME
GIRL

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DOME GIRL

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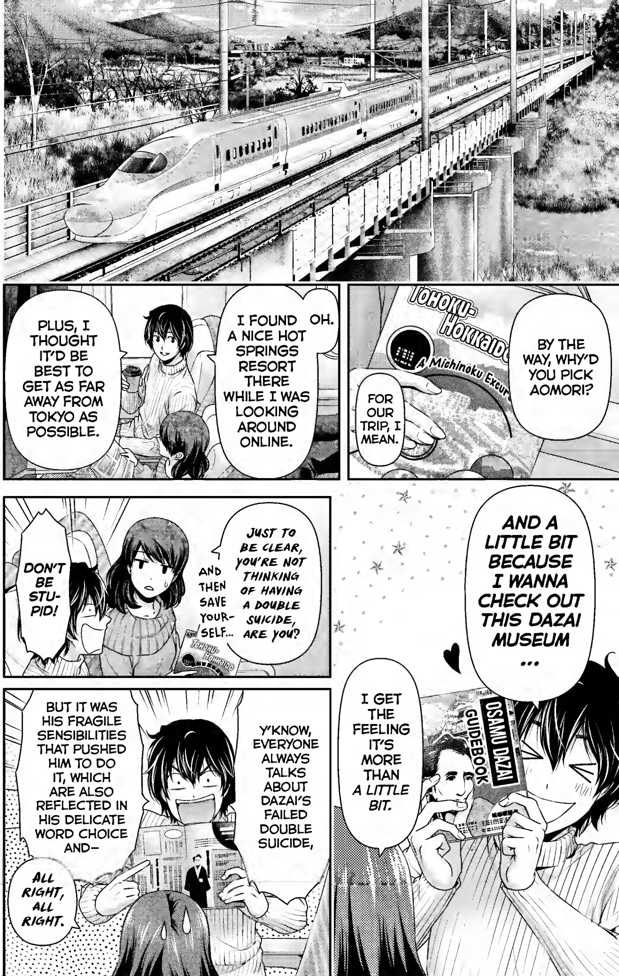
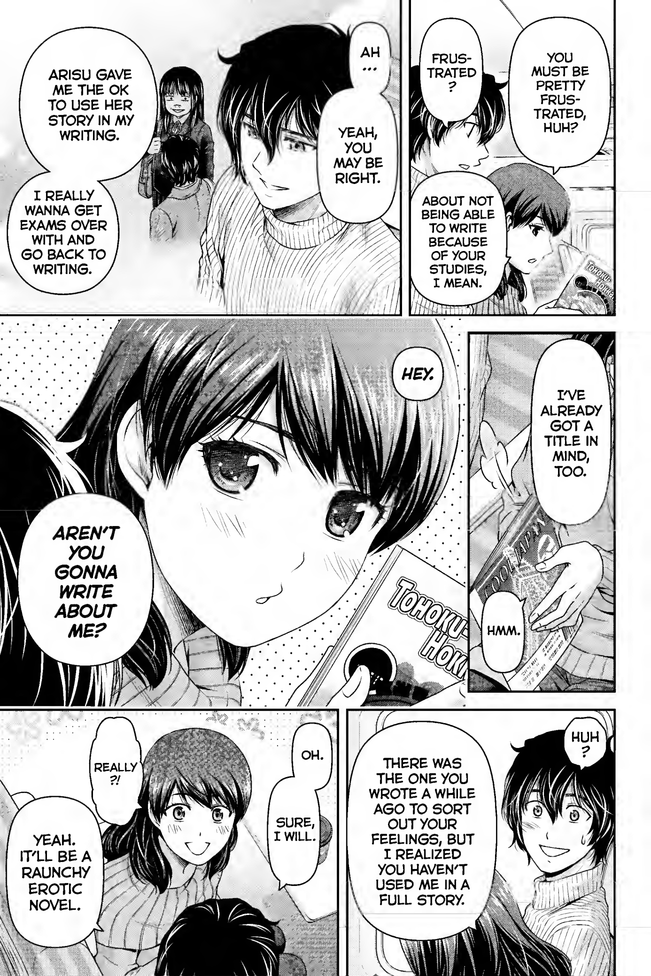
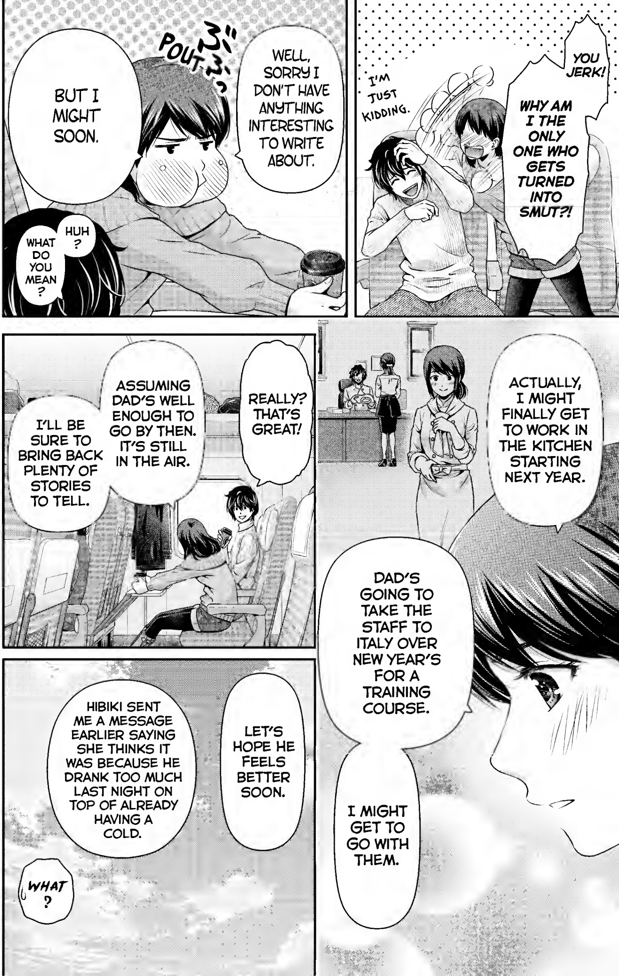
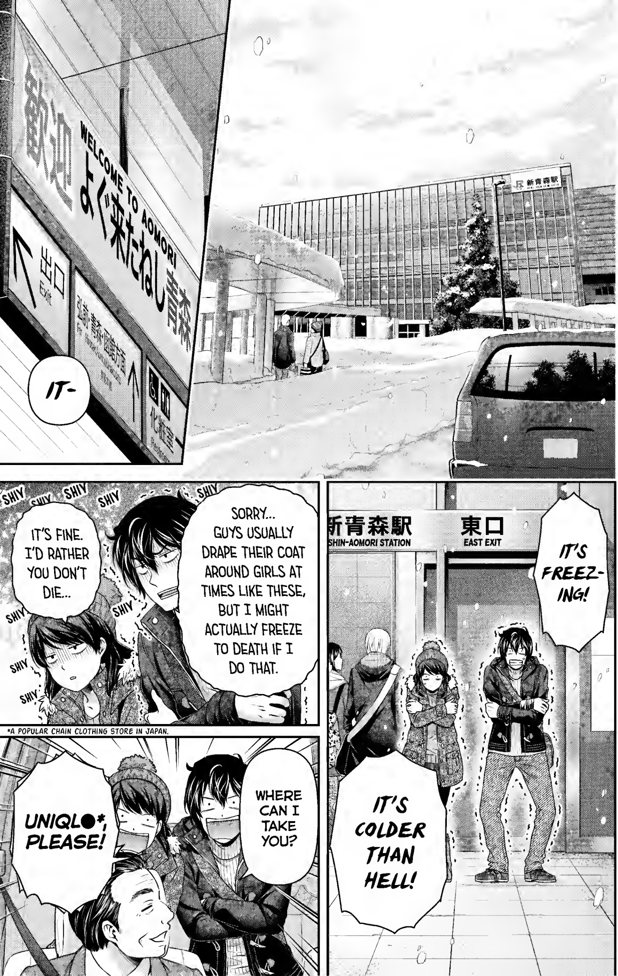
CHAPTER 125: ALWAYS TOGETHER…

Classic
Osamu Dazai
THE SETTING SUN

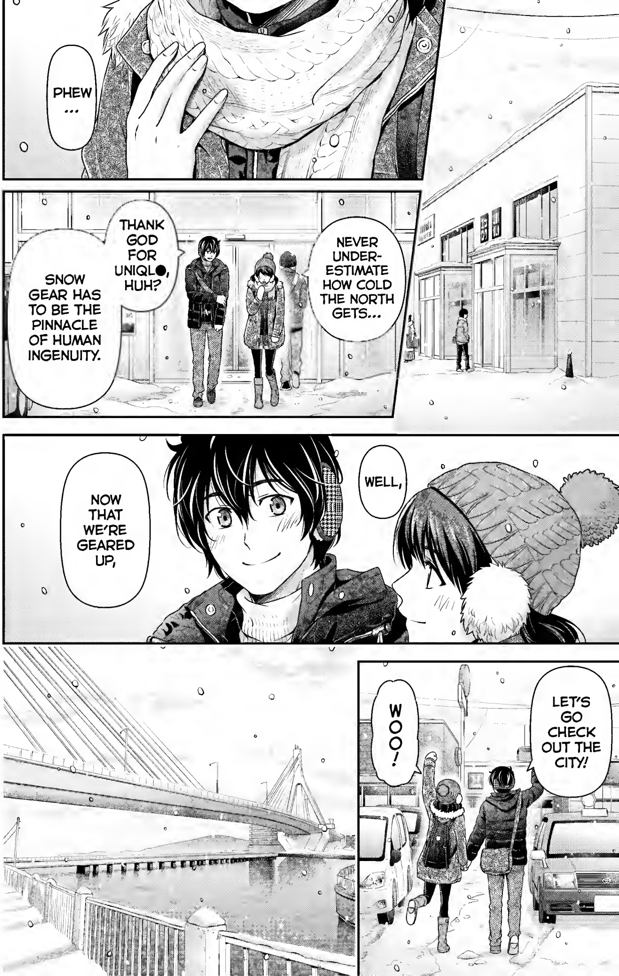

BY THE WAY, WHY'D YOU PICK AOMORI?
FOR OUR TRIP, I MEAN.
TOHOKU-HOKKAIDO
A Michinoku Excur
OH.
I FOUND A NICE HOT SPRINGS RESORT THERE WHILE I WAS LOOKING AROUND ONLINE.
PLUS, I THOUGHT IT'D BE BEST TO GET AS FAR AWAY FROM TOKYO AS POSSIBLE.
AND A LITTLE BIT BECAUSE I WANNA CHECK OUT THIS DAZAI MUSEUM...
JUST TO BE CLEAR, YOU'RE NOT THINKING OF HAVING A DOUBLE SUICIDE, ARE YOU?
AND THEN SAVE YOURSELF...
DON'T BE STUPID!
TOHOKU-HOKKAIDO
I GET THE FEELING IT'S MORE THAN *A LITTLE BIT.*
OSAMU DAZAI GUIDEBOOK
Y'KNOW, EVERYONE ALWAYS TALKS ABOUT DAZAI'S FAILED DOUBLE SUICIDE,
BUT IT WAS HIS FRAGILE SENSIBILITIES THAT PUSHED HIM TO DO IT, WHICH ARE ALSO REFLECTED IN HIS DELICATE WORD CHOICE AND—
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT.

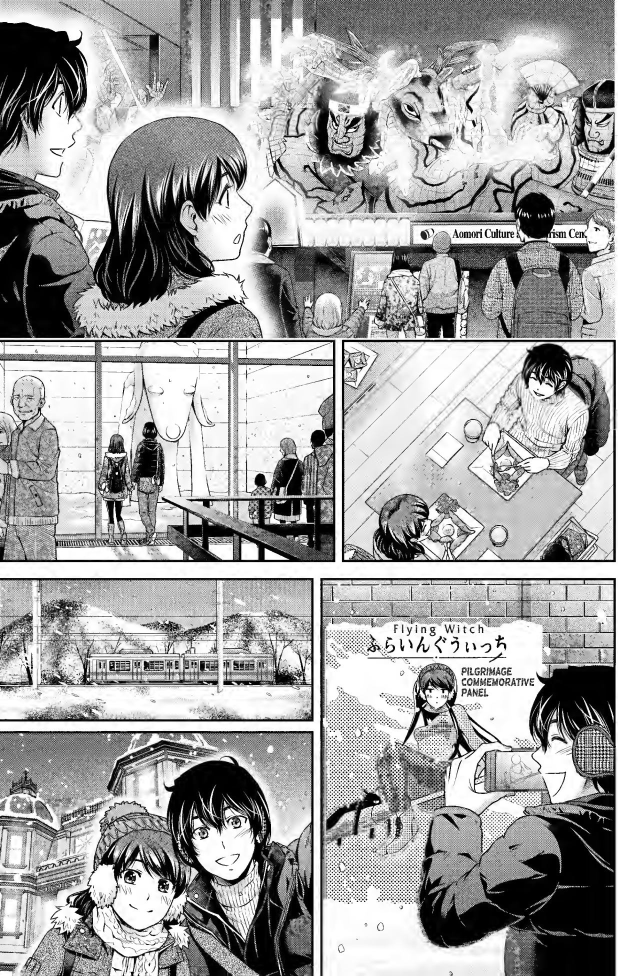

YOU MUST BE PRETTY FRUSTRATED, HUH?
FRUSTRATED?
ABOUT NOT BEING ABLE TO WRITE BECAUSE OF YOUR STUDIES, I MEAN.
TOHOKU-HOKU
AH ...
YEAH, YOU MAY BE RIGHT.
ARISU GAVE ME THE OK TO USE HER STORY IN MY WRITING.
I REALLY WANNA GET EXAMS OVER WITH AND GO BACK TO WRITING.
I'VE ALREADY GOT A TITLE IN MIND, TOO.
HMM.
HEY.
AREN'T YOU GONNA WRITE ABOUT ME?
TOHOKU-HOKU
HUH?
THERE WAS THE ONE YOU WROTE A WHILE AGO TO SORT OUT YOUR FEELINGS, BUT I REALIZED YOU HAVEN'T USED ME IN A FULL STORY.
OH.
SURE, I WILL.
REALLY?!
YEAH. IT'LL BE A RAUNCHY EROTIC NOVEL.

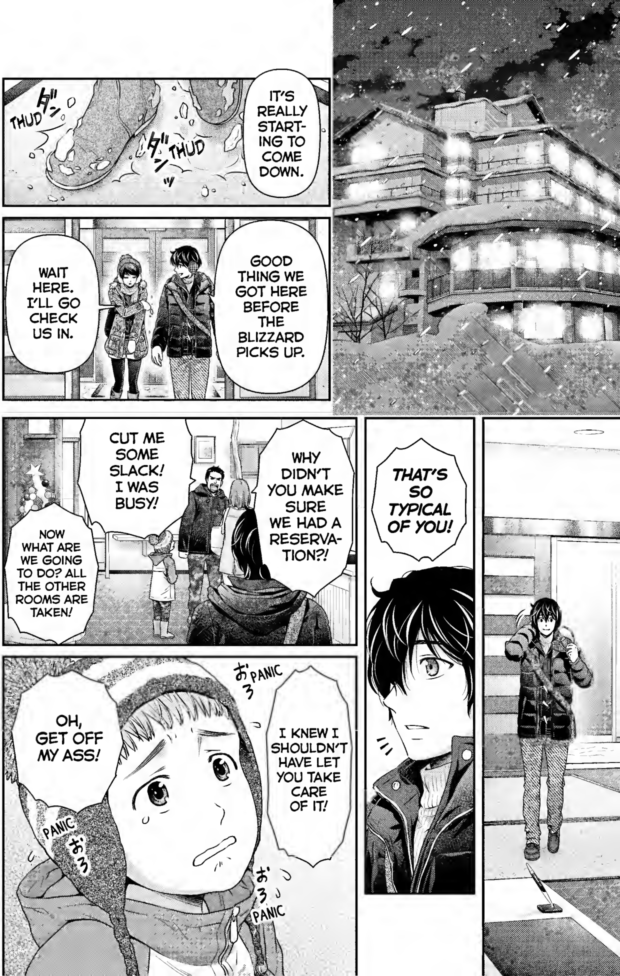

YOU JERK!
WHY AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO GETS TURNED INTO SMUT?!
I'M JUST KIDDING.
POUT ぶぅ
WELL, SORRY I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING INTERESTING TO WRITE ABOUT.
BUT I MIGHT SOON.
HUH?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
ACTUALLY, I MIGHT FINALLY GET TO WORK IN THE KITCHEN STARTING NEXT YEAR.
DAD'S GOING TO TAKE THE STAFF TO ITALY OVER NEW YEAR'S FOR A TRAINING COURSE.
I MIGHT GET TO GO WITH THEM.
REALLY? THAT'S GREAT!
ASSUMING DAD'S WELL ENOUGH TO GO BY THEN. IT'S STILL IN THE AIR.
I'LL BE SURE TO BRING BACK PLENTY OF STORIES TO TELL.
LET'S HOPE HE FEELS BETTER SOON.
HIBIKI SENT ME A MESSAGE EARLIER SAYING SHE THINKS IT WAS BECAUSE HE DRANK TOO MUCH LAST NIGHT ON TOP OF ALREADY HAVING A COLD.
WHAT?

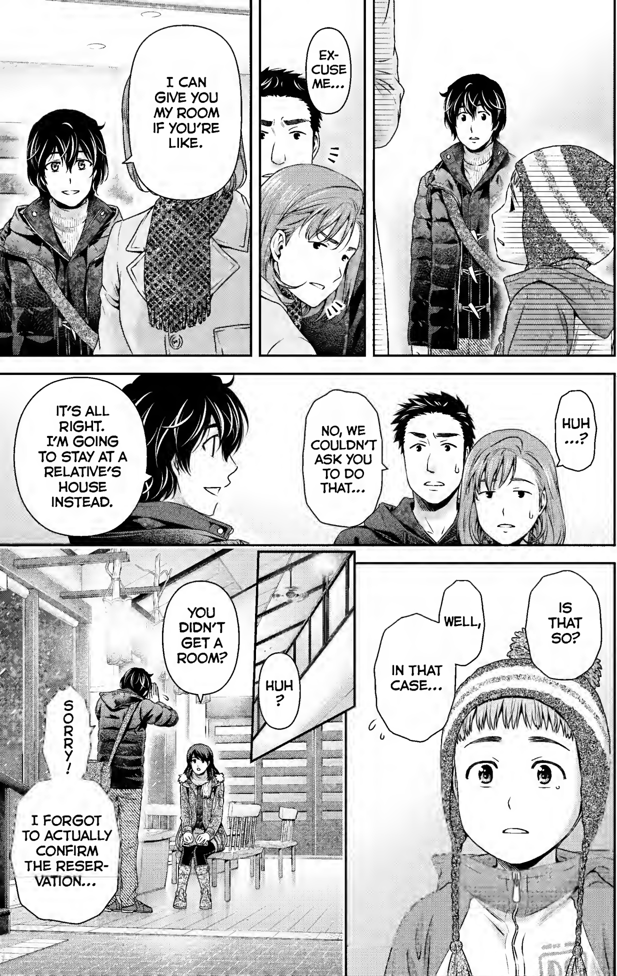

歓迎
WELCOME TO AOMORI
よぐ来たねし青森
出口
Exit
化粧室
IT-
新青森駅
新青森駅 SHIN-AOMORI STATION
東口 EAST EXIT
IT'S FREEZ-ING!
IT'S COLDER THAN HELL!
SHIV SHIV SHIV SHIV SHIV
SORRY... GUYS USUALLY DRAPE THEIR COAT AROUND GIRLS AT TIMES LIKE THESE, BUT I MIGHT ACTUALLY FREEZE TO DEATH IF I DO THAT.
IT'S FINE. I'D RATHER YOU DON'T DIE...
SHIV SHIV SHIV SHIV
WHERE CAN I TAKE YOU?
UNIQL●*, PLEASE!

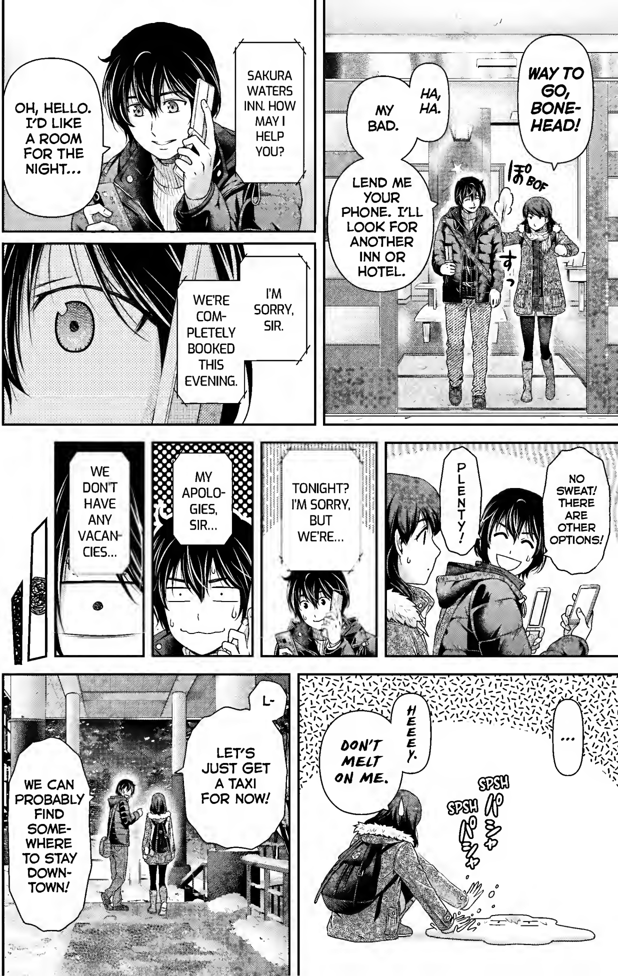
*A POPULAR CHAIN CLOTHING STORE IN JAPAN.

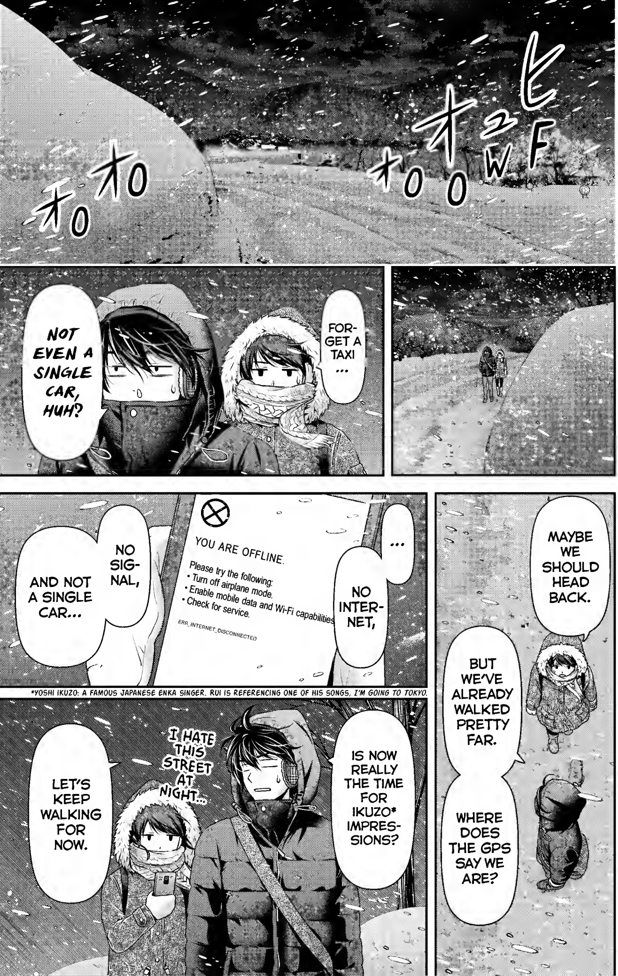

PHEW...
NEVER UNDERESTIMATE HOW COLD THE NORTH GETS...
THANK GOD FOR UNIQL●, HUH?
SNOW GEAR HAS TO BE THE PINNACLE OF HUMAN INGENUITY.
WELL,
NOW THAT WE'RE GEARED UP,
LET'S GO CHECK OUT THE CITY!
WOO!


Aomori Culture
rism Cen
Flying Witch
ふらいんぐうぃっち
PILGRIMAGE COMMEMORATIVE PANEL


IT'S REALLY STARTING TO COME DOWN.
ダン THUD
ダンッ THUD
GOOD THING WE GOT HERE BEFORE THE BLIZZARD PICKS UP.
WAIT HERE. I'LL GO CHECK US IN.
THAT'S SO TYPICAL OF YOU!
WHY DIDN'T YOU MAKE SURE WE HAD A RESERVATION?!
CUT ME SOME SLACK! I WAS BUSY!
NOW WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? ALL THE OTHER ROOMS ARE TAKEN!
おろ PANIC
I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET YOU TAKE CARE OF IT!
OH, GET OFF MY ASS!
PANIC おろ
おろ PANIC


EX-CUSE ME...
I CAN GIVE YOU MY ROOM IF YOU'RE LIKE.
HUH...?
NO, WE COULDN'T ASK YOU TO DO THAT...
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'M GOING TO STAY AT A RELATIVE'S HOUSE INSTEAD.
IS THAT SO?
WELL,
IN THAT CASE...
YOU DIDN'T GET A ROOM?
HUH?
SORRY!
I FORGOT TO ACTUALLY CONFIRM THE RESERVATION...


WAY TO GO, BONEHEAD!
HA, HA.
MY BAD.
ぽ BOF
LEND ME YOUR PHONE. I'LL LOOK FOR ANOTHER INN OR HOTEL.
すっ
SAKURA WATERS INN. HOW MAY I HELP YOU?
OH, HELLO. I'D LIKE A ROOM FOR THE NIGHT...
I'M SORRY, SIR.
WE'RE COMPLETELY BOOKED THIS EVENING.
NO SWEAT! THERE ARE OTHER OPTIONS!
PLENTY!
TONIGHT? I'M SORRY, BUT WE'RE...
MY APOLOGIES, SIR...
WE DON'T HAVE ANY VACANCIES...
...
HEEEY.
DON'T MELT ON ME.
SPSH パシャ
SPSH パシャ
L-
LET'S JUST GET A TAXI FOR NOW!
WE CAN PROBABLY FIND SOMEWHERE TO STAY DOWNTOWN!

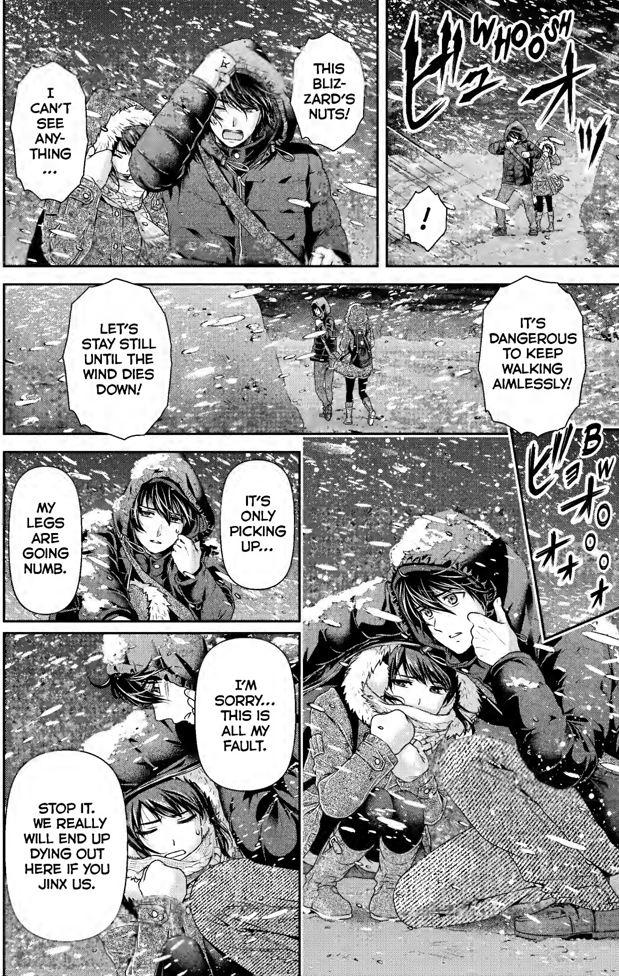

ヒュオォ
FWOOO
オォオ
OOO
FOR-GET A TAXI ...
NOT EVEN A SINGLE CAR, HUH?
MAYBE WE SHOULD HEAD BACK.
BUT WE'VE ALREADY WALKED PRETTY FAR.
WHERE DOES THE GPS SAY WE ARE?
...
NO INTERNET,
NO SIGNAL,
AND NOT A SINGLE CAR...
IS NOW REALLY THE TIME FOR IKUZO* IMPRESSIONS?
I HATE THIS STREET AT NIGHT...
LET'S KEEP WALKING FOR NOW.

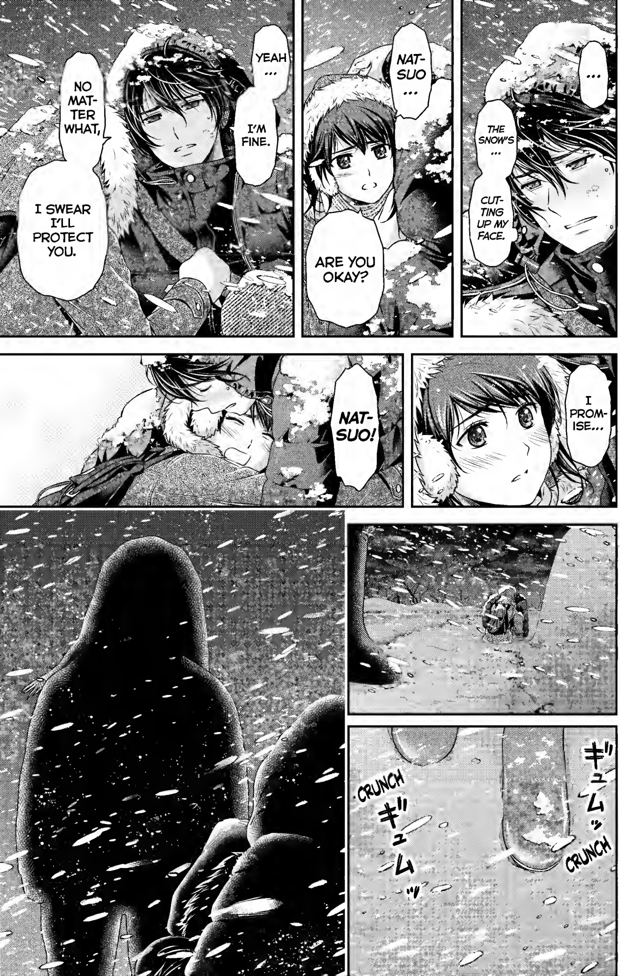
YOU ARE OFFLINE.

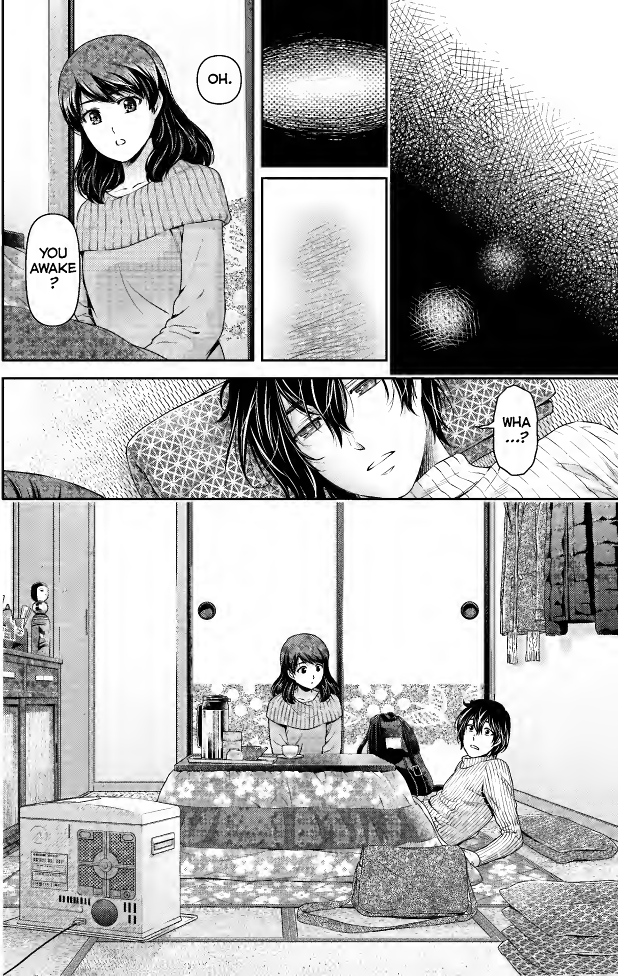
Please try the following:
- Turn off airplane mode.
- Enable mobile data and Wi-Fi capabilities
- Check for service.

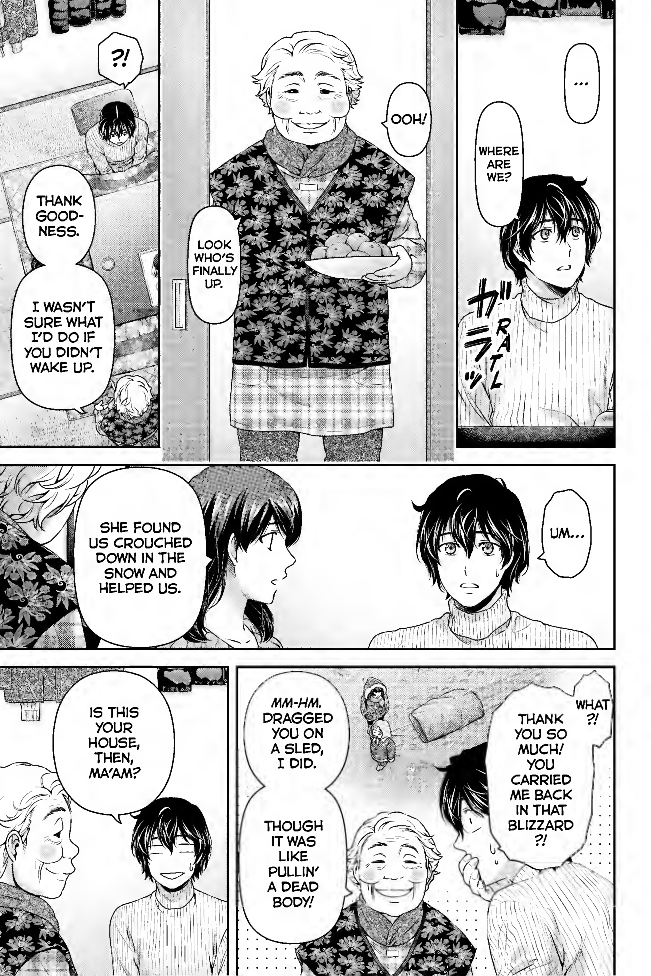
ERR_INTERNET_DISCONNECTED

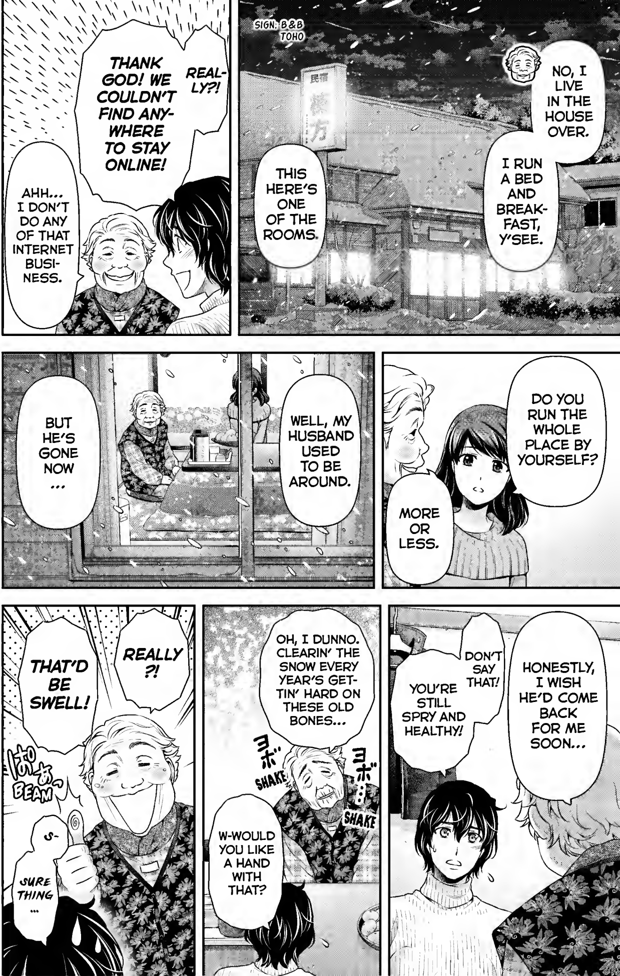
*YOSHI IKUZO: A FAMOUS JAPANESE ENKA SINGER. RUI IS REFERENCING ONE OF HIS SONGS, *I'M GOING TO TOKYO.*

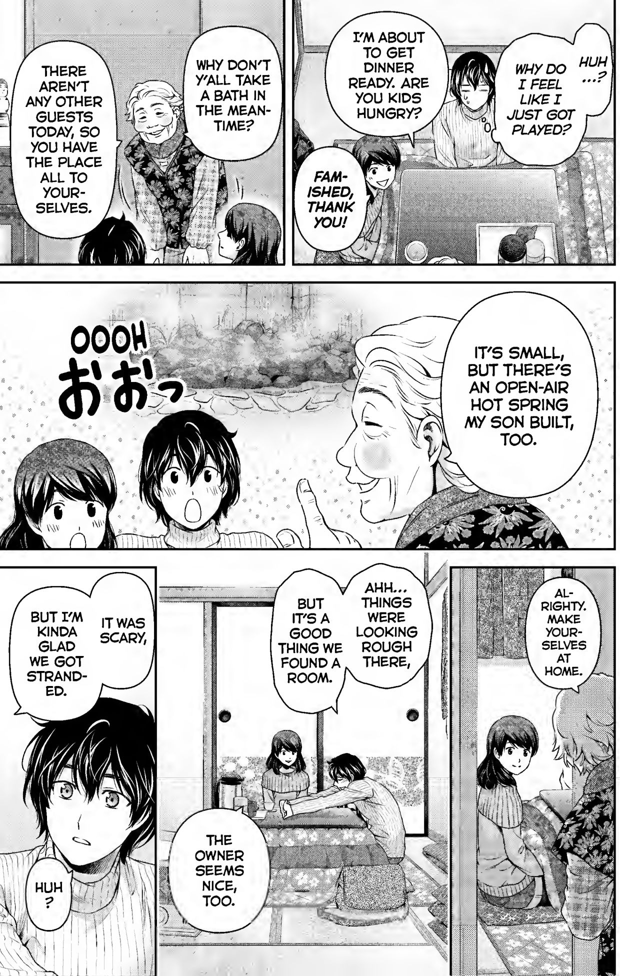

WHOOSH
ビュオッ
!
THIS BLIZZARD'S NUTS!
I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING...
IT'S DANGEROUS TO KEEP WALKING AIMLESSLY!
LET'S STAY STILL UNTIL THE WIND DIES DOWN!
BWOOOO
ビョオオォォォ
IT'S ONLY PICKING UP...
MY LEGS ARE GOING NUMB.
I'M SORRY... THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.
STOP IT. WE REALLY WILL END UP DYING OUT HERE IF YOU JINX US.

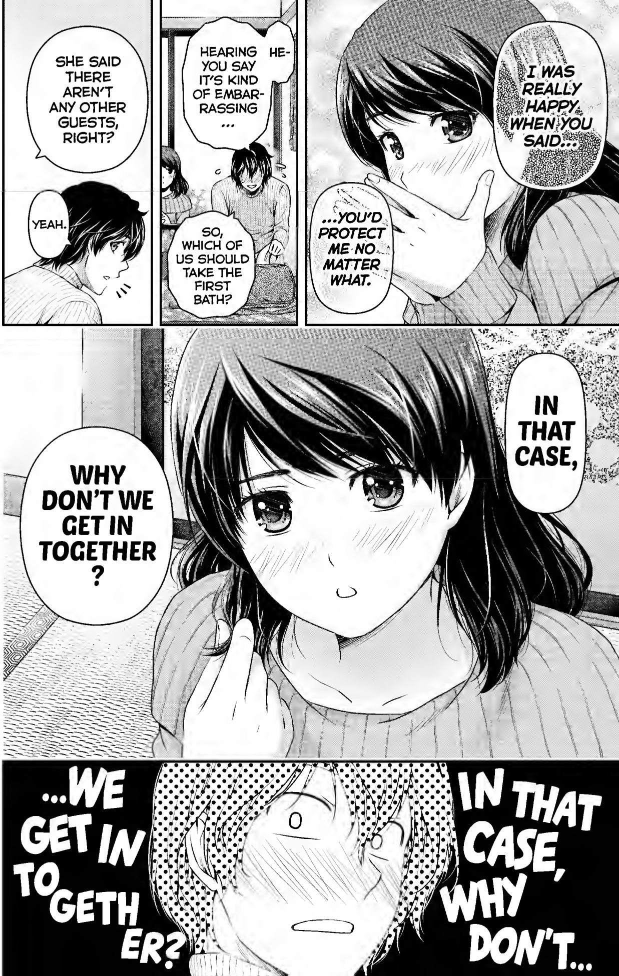

...
THE SNOW'S ... CUTTING UP MY FACE.
NATSUO ...
ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH ...
I'M FINE.
NO MATTER WHAT,
I SWEAR I'LL PROTECT YOU.
I PROMISE...
NATSUO!
ギュムッ
CRUNCH
ギュムッ
CRUNCH


OH.
YOU AWAKE?
WHA...?

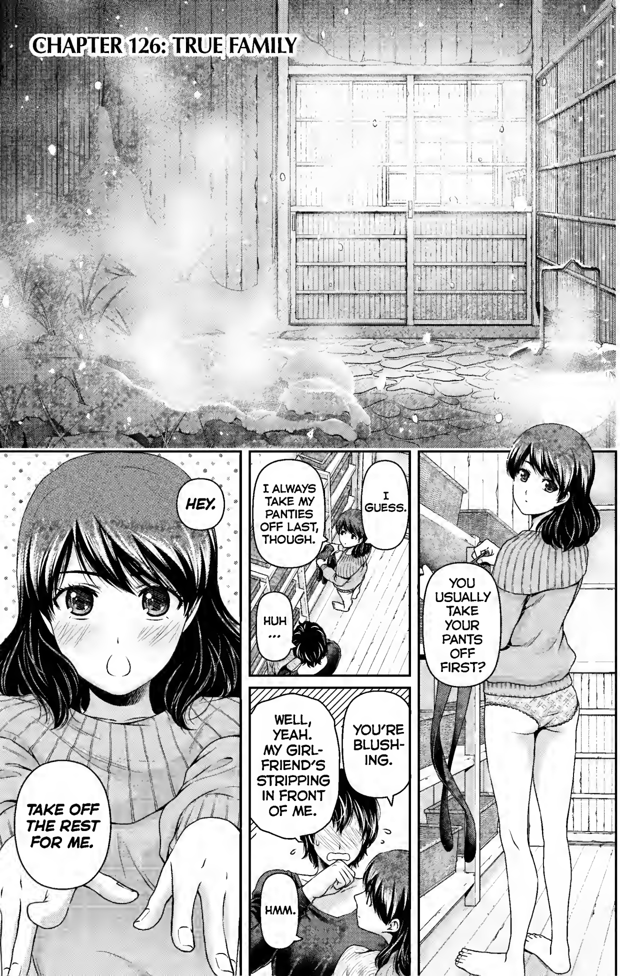

...
WHERE ARE WE?
ガラッ
RATTL
OOH!
LOOK WHO'S FINALLY UP.
?!
THANK GOODNESS.
I WASN'T SURE WHAT I'D DO IF YOU DIDN'T WAKE UP.
UM...
SHE FOUND US CROUCHED DOWN IN THE SNOW AND HELPED US.
WHAT?!
THANK YOU SO MUCH! YOU CARRIED ME BACK IN THAT BLIZZARD?!
MM-HM. DRAGGED YOU ON A SLED, I DID.
THOUGH IT WAS LIKE PULLIN' A DEAD BODY!
IS THIS YOUR HOUSE, THEN, MA'AM?

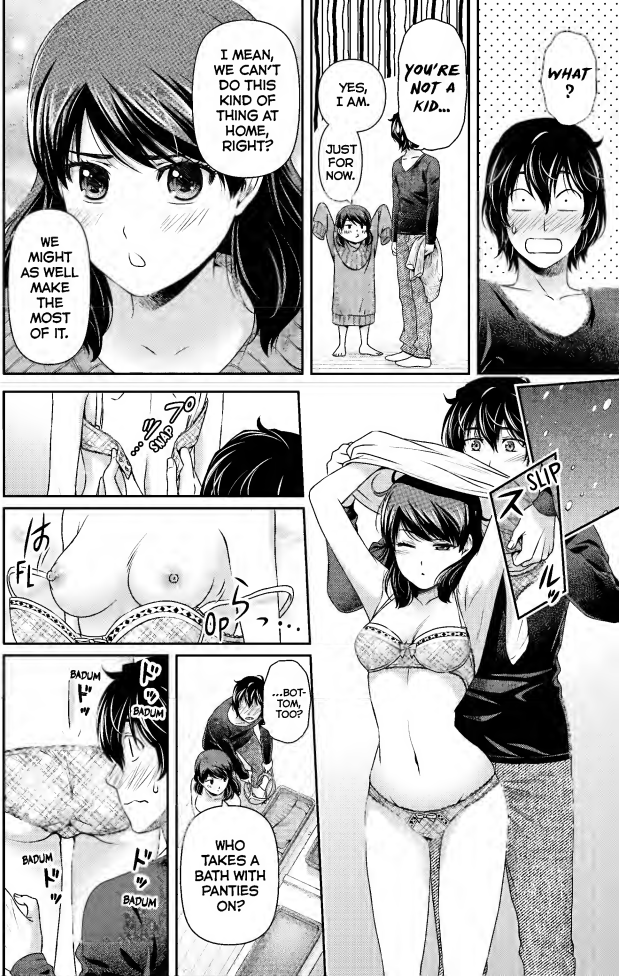

SIGN: B&B TOHO
NO, I LIVE IN THE HOUSE OVER.
I RUN A BED AND BREAKFAST, Y'SEE.
THIS HERE'S ONE OF THE ROOMS.
REALLY?!
THANK GOD! WE COULDN'T FIND ANYWHERE TO STAY ONLINE!
AHH... I DON'T DO ANY OF THAT INTERNET BUSINESS.
DO YOU RUN THE WHOLE PLACE BY YOURSELF?
MORE OR LESS.
WELL, MY HUSBAND USED TO BE AROUND.
BUT HE'S GONE NOW...
HONESTLY, I WISH HE'D COME BACK FOR ME SOON...
DON'T SAY THAT!
YOU'RE STILL SPRY AND HEALTHY!
OH, I DUNNO. CLEARIN' THE SNOW EVERY YEAR'S GETTIN' HARD ON THESE OLD BONES...
ヨボ SHAKE
ヨボ… SHAKE
W-WOULD YOU LIKE A HAND WITH THAT?
REALLY?!
THAT'D BE SWELL!
ぱあっ BEAM
S- SURE THING...

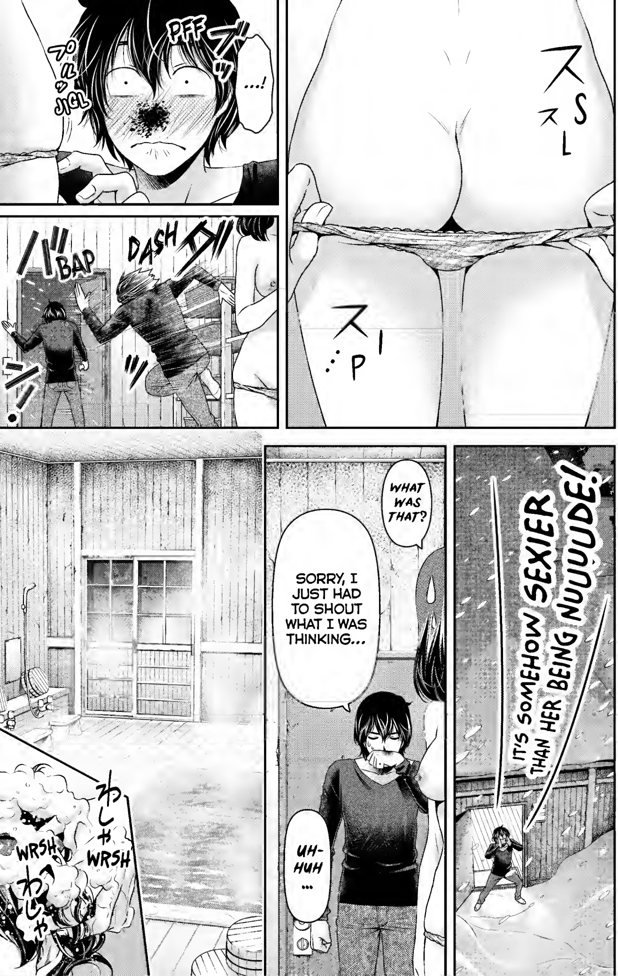

I'M ABOUT TO GET DINNER READY. ARE YOU KIDS HUNGRY?
FAMISHED, THANK YOU!
HUH ...?
WHY DO I FEEL LIKE I JUST GOT PLAYED?
WHY DON'T Y'ALL TAKE A BATH IN THE MEANTIME?
THERE AREN'T ANY OTHER GUESTS TODAY, SO YOU HAVE THE PLACE ALL TO YOURSELVES.
IT'S SMALL, BUT THERE'S AN OPEN-AIR HOT SPRING *MY* SON BUILT, TOO.
OOOH
おおっ
ALRIGHTY. MAKE YOURSELVES AT HOME.
AHH... THINGS WERE LOOKING ROUGH THERE,
BUT IT'S A GOOD THING WE FOUND A ROOM.
THE OWNER SEEMS NICE, TOO.
IT WAS SCARY,
BUT I'M KINDA GLAD WE GOT STRANDED.
HUH ?

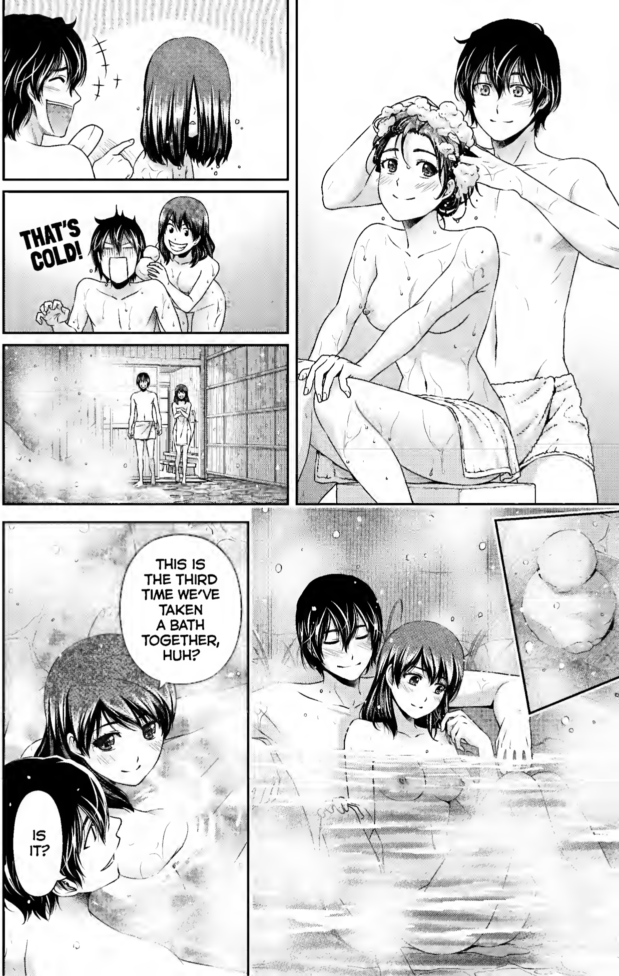

I WAS REALLY HAPPY WHEN YOU SAID...
...YOU'D PROTECT ME NO MATTER WHAT.
HE- HEARING YOU SAY IT'S KIND OF EMBARRASSING...
SO, WHICH OF US SHOULD TAKE THE FIRST BATH?
SHE SAID THERE AREN'T ANY OTHER GUESTS, RIGHT?
YEAH.
IN THAT CASE,
WHY DON'T WE GET IN TOGETHER?
IN THAT CASE, WHY DON'T...
...WE GET IN TOGETHER?

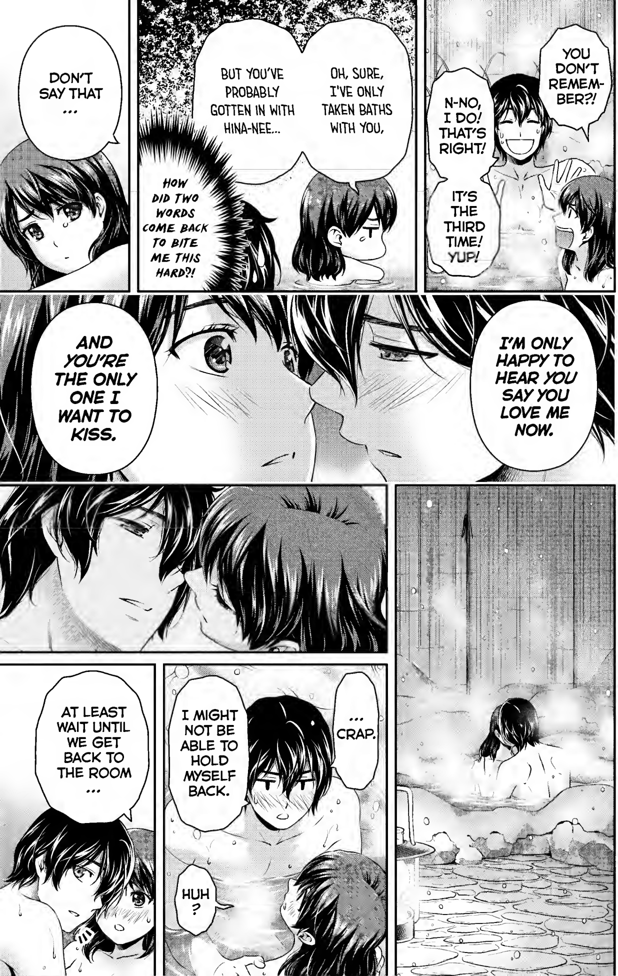
CHAPTER 126: TRUE FAMILY

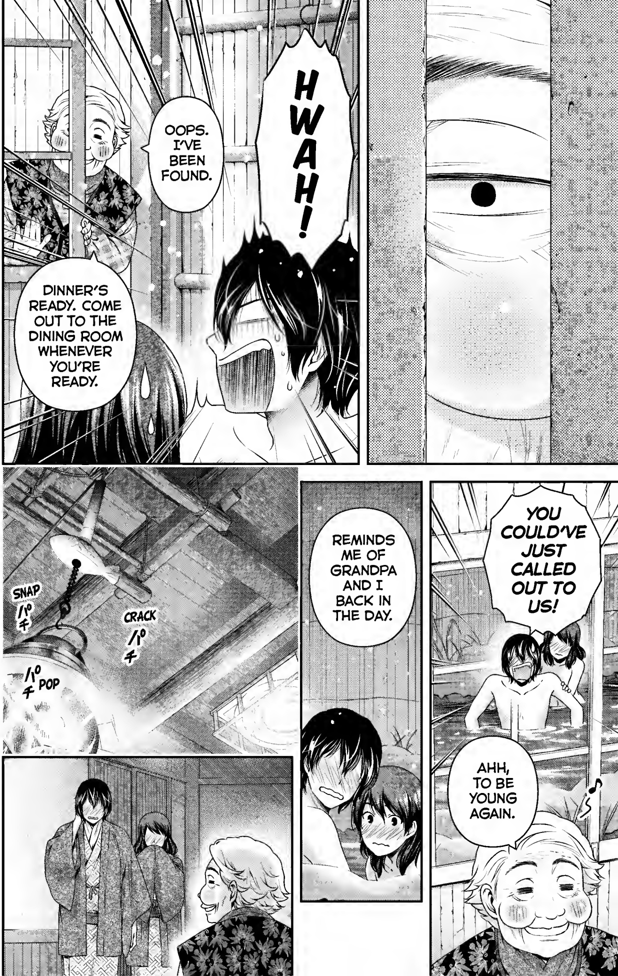

YOU USUALLY TAKE YOUR PANTS OFF FIRST?
I GUESS.
I ALWAYS TAKE MY PANTIES OFF LAST, THOUGH.
HUH...
YOU'RE BLUSHING.
WELL, YEAH. MY GIRLFRIEND'S STRIPPING IN FRONT OF ME.
HMM.
HEY.
TAKE OFF THE REST FOR ME.

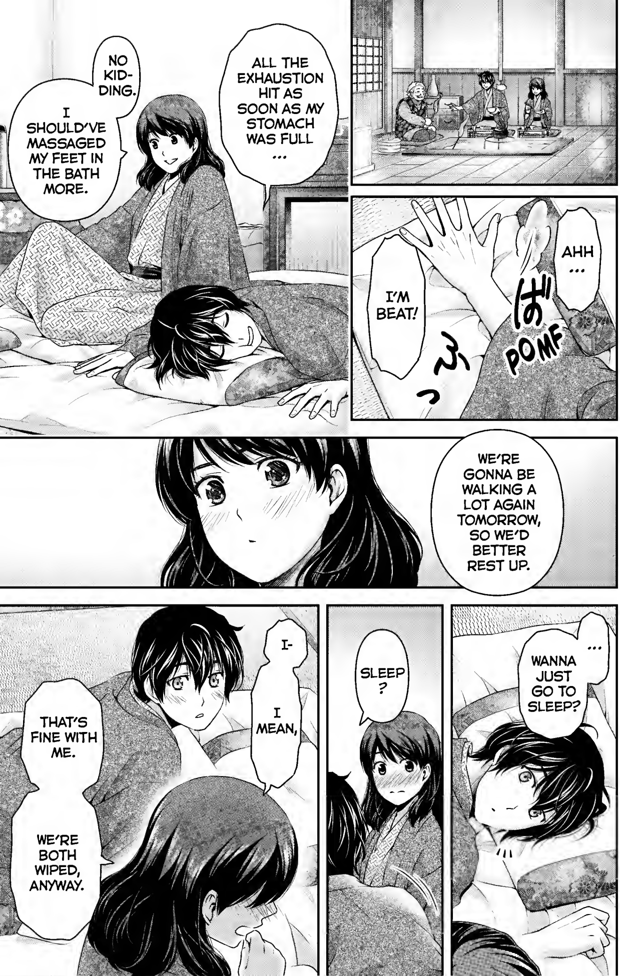

WHAT?
YOU'RE NOT A KID...
YES, I AM.
JUST FOR NOW.
I MEAN, WE CAN'T DO THIS KIND OF THING AT HOME, RIGHT?
WE MIGHT AS WELL MAKE THE MOST OF IT.
スルッ SLIP
プツ... SNAP
は FL
らっ... OP
...BOTTOM, TOO?
WHO TAKES A BATH WITH PANTIES ON?
ドッ BADUM
ドッ BADUM
ドッ BADUM
ドッ BADUM

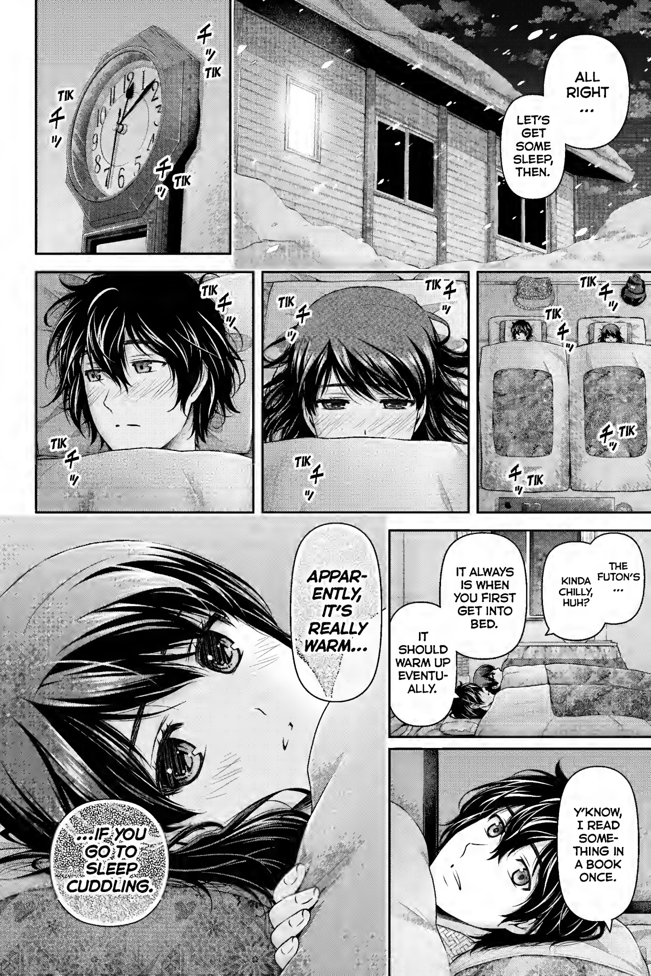

スス
S
L
スッ
P I
...!
PFF ブッ
プルッ JIGL
DASH ダッ
バッ BAP
IT'S SOMEHOW SEXIER THAN HER BEING NUUUUUDE!
WHAT WAS THAT?
SORRY, I JUST HAD TO SHOUT WHAT I WAS THINKING...
UH-HUH...
わしゃ WRSH
わしゃ WRSH

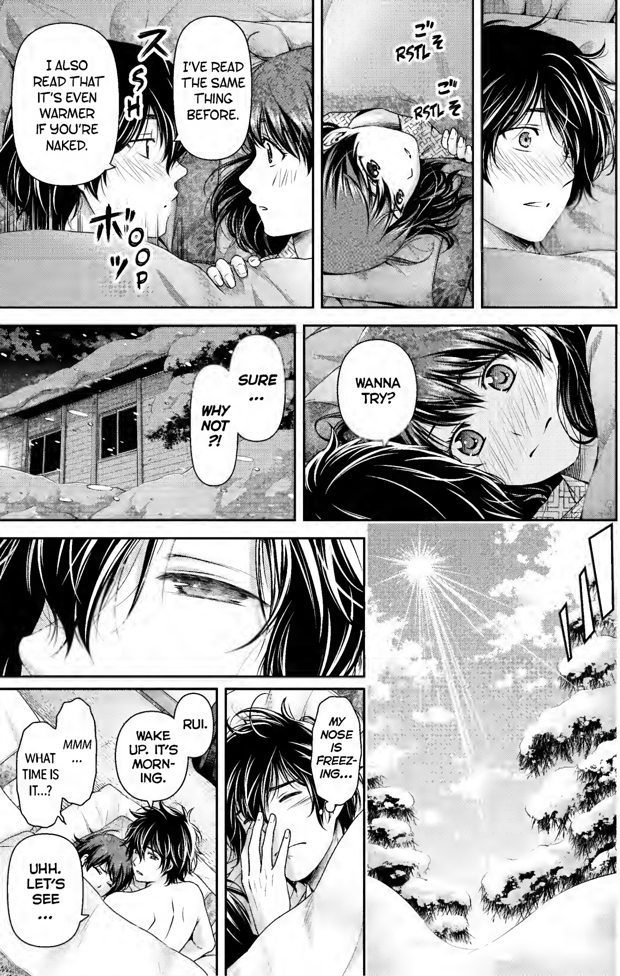

THAT'S COLD!
THIS IS THE THIRD TIME WE'VE TAKEN A BATH TOGETHER, HUH?
IS IT?

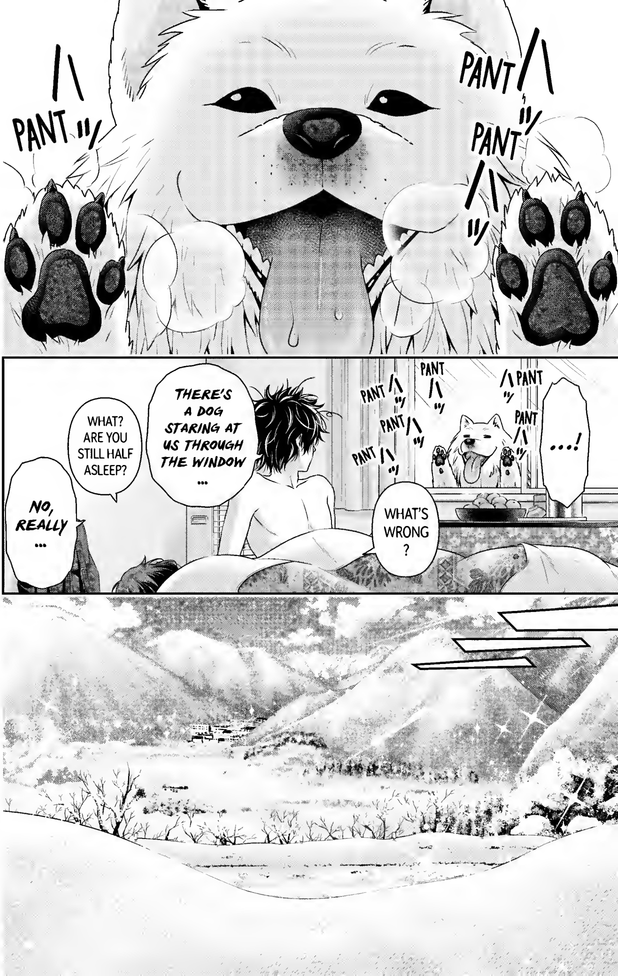

YOU DON'T REMEMBER?!
N-NO, I DO! THAT'S RIGHT!
IT'S THE THIRD TIME! YUP!
OH, SURE, I'VE ONLY TAKEN BATHS WITH YOU,
BUT YOU'VE PROBABLY GOTTEN IN WITH HINA-NEE...
HOW DID TWO WORDS COME BACK TO BITE ME THIS HARD?!
DON'T SAY THAT ...
I'M ONLY HAPPY TO HEAR YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME NOW.
AND YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I WANT TO KISS.
... CRAP.
I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD MYSELF BACK.
HUH?
AT LEAST WAIT UNTIL WE GET BACK TO THE ROOM ...

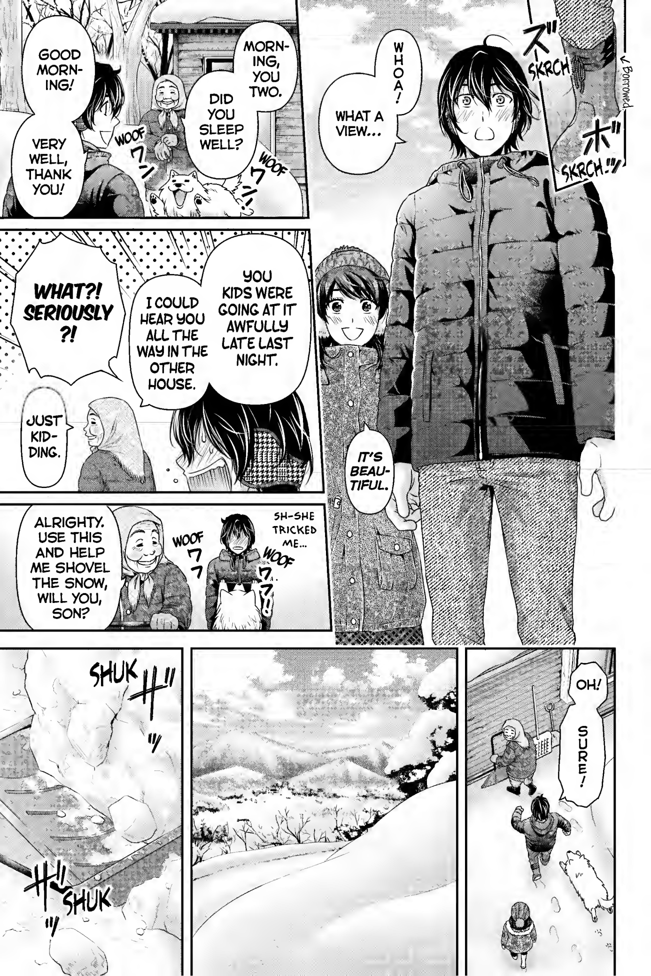

HWAH!
OOPS. I'VE BEEN FOUND.
DINNER'S READY. COME OUT TO THE DINING ROOM WHENEVER YOU'RE READY.
YOU COULD'VE JUST CALLED OUT TO US!
AHH, TO BE YOUNG AGAIN.
REMINDS ME OF GRANDPA AND I BACK IN THE DAY.
CRACK パチ
SNAP パチ
パチ POP

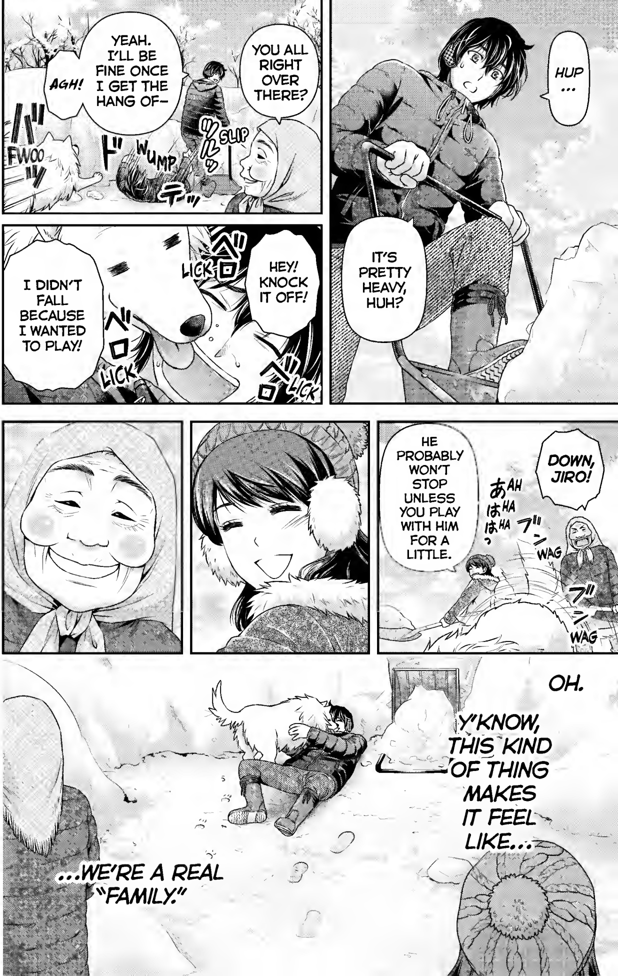

AHH …
ぼ
POMF
I'M BEAT!
ふっ
ALL THE EXHAUSTION HIT AS SOON AS MY STOMACH WAS FULL …
NO KID-DING.
I SHOULD'VE MASSAGED MY FEET IN THE BATH MORE.
WE'RE GONNA BE WALKING A LOT AGAIN TOMORROW, SO WE'D BETTER REST UP.
…
WANNA JUST GO TO SLEEP?
SLEEP?
I-
I MEAN,
THAT'S FINE WITH ME.
WE'RE BOTH WIPED, ANYWAY.

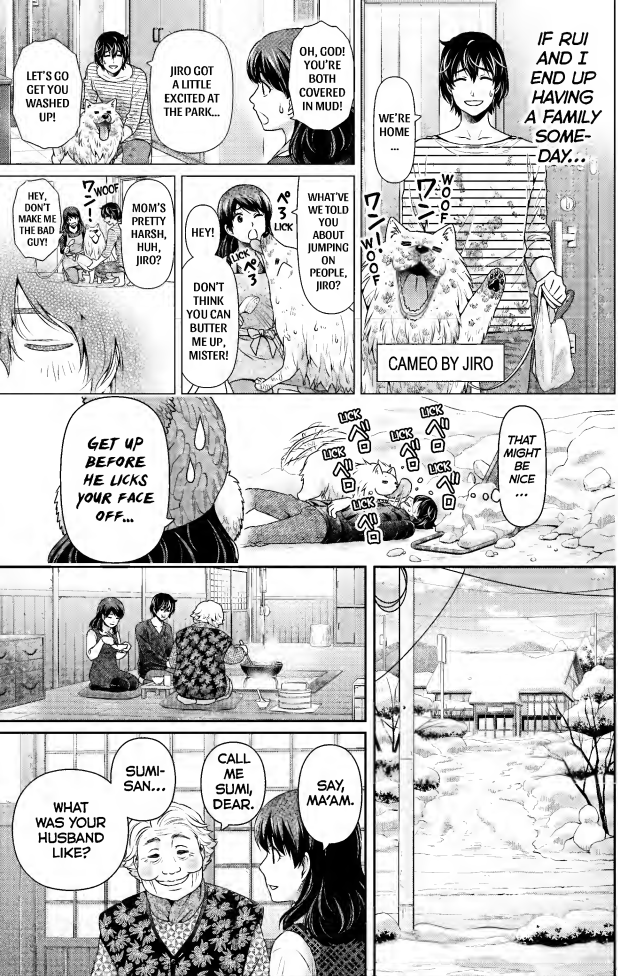

ALL RIGHT…
LET'S GET SOME SLEEP, THEN.
チッ TIK
チッ TIK
チッ TIK
チッ TIK
チッ TIK
チッ TIK
チッ TIK
チッ TIK
チッ TIK
チッ TIK
チッ TIK
THE FUTON'S…
KINDA CHILLY, HUH?
IT ALWAYS IS WHEN YOU FIRST GET INTO BED.
IT SHOULD WARM UP EVENTUALLY.
Y'KNOW, I READ SOMETHING IN A BOOK ONCE.
APPARENTLY, IT'S REALLY WARM…
…IF YOU GO TO SLEEP CUDDLING.

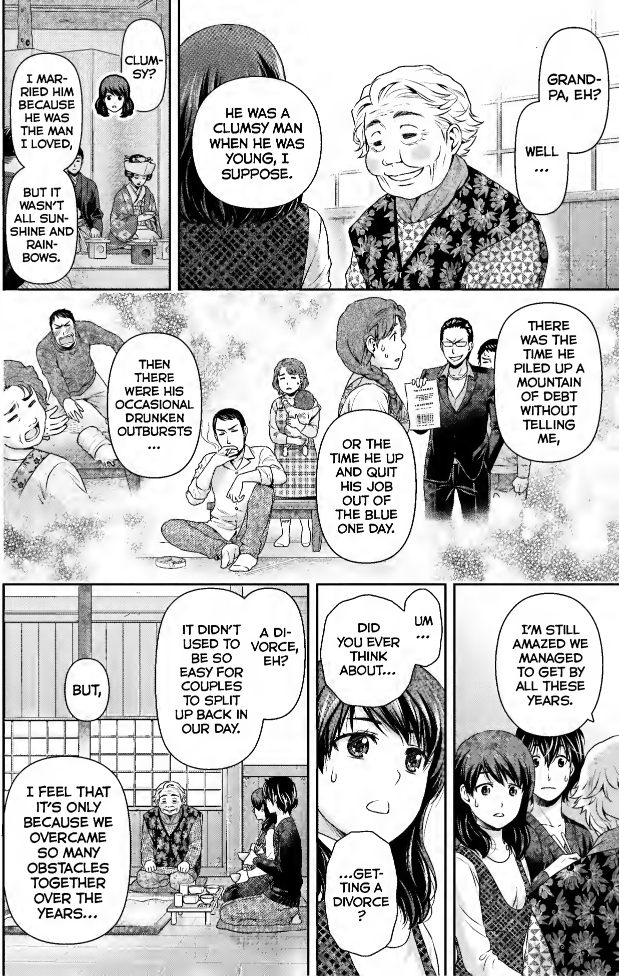

ごそ RSTL
ごそ RSTL
I'VE READ THE SAME THING BEFORE.
I ALSO READ THAT IT'S EVEN WARMER IF YOU'RE NAKED.
ス SH
ボッ OOP
WANNA TRY?
SURE...
WHY NOT?!
MY NOSE IS FREEZING...
RUI.
WAKE UP. IT'S MORNING.
MMM...
WHAT TIME IS IT...?
UHH. LET'S SEE...

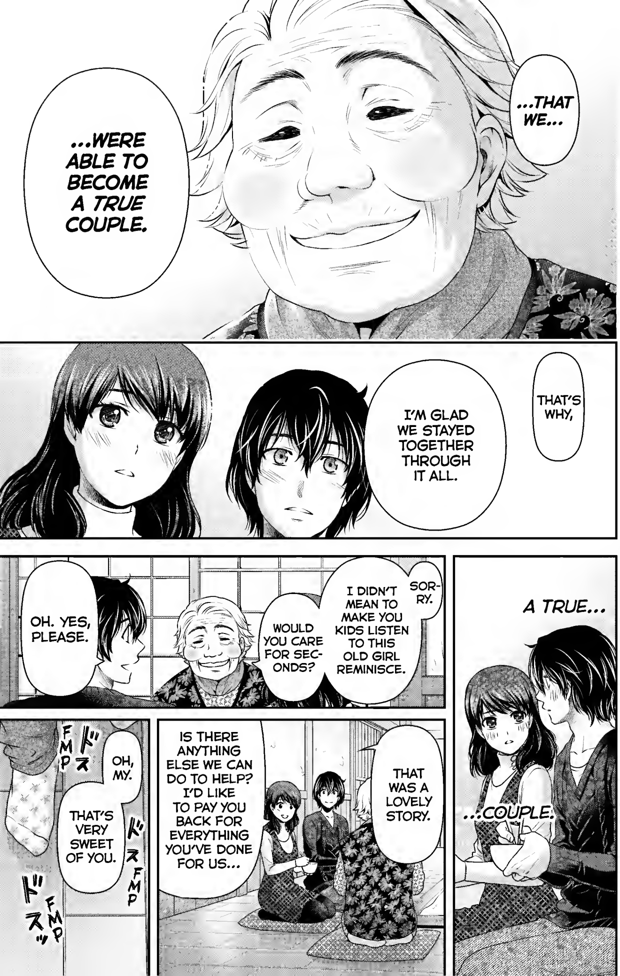

PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
...!
WHAT'S WRONG?
THERE'S A DOG STARING AT US THROUGH THE WINDOW...
WHAT? ARE YOU STILL HALF ASLEEP?
NO, REALLY...

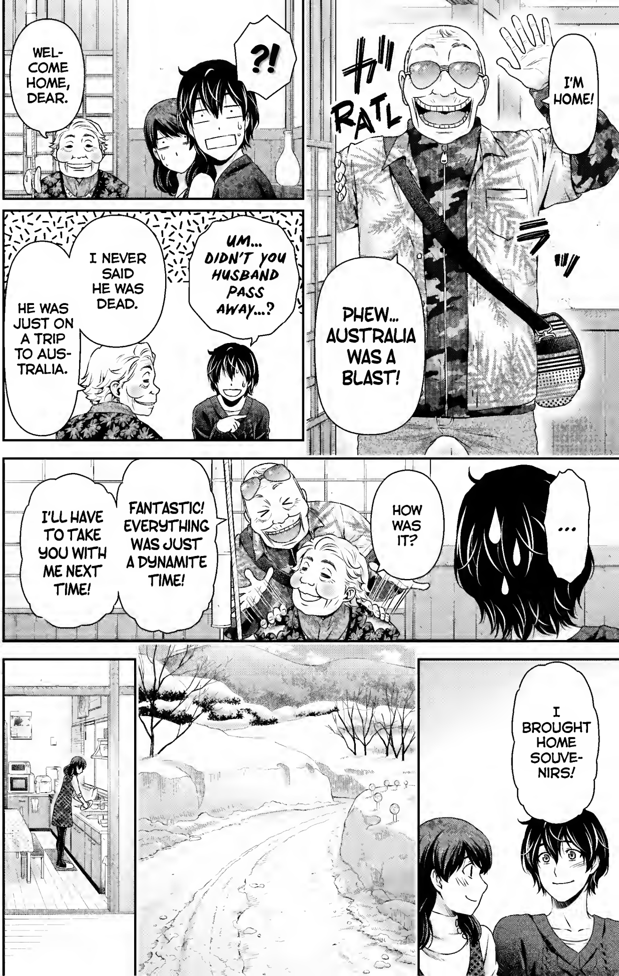

Borrowed
ズ SKRCH
ボ SKRCH!
WHOA! WHAT A VIEW...
IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
MORNING, YOU TWO. DID YOU SLEEP WELL?
GOOD MORNING!
VERY WELL, THANK YOU!
WOOF ワン
WOOF ワン!
YOU KIDS WERE GOING AT IT AWFULLY LATE LAST NIGHT.
I COULD HEAR YOU ALL THE WAY IN THE OTHER HOUSE.
WHAT?! SERIOUSLY?!
JUST KIDDING.
SH-SHE TRICKED ME...
WOOF ワ
WOOF ワ!
ALRIGHTY. USE THIS AND HELP ME SHOVEL THE SNOW, WILL YOU, SON?
OH! SURE!
SHUK ザッ
ザッ SHUK

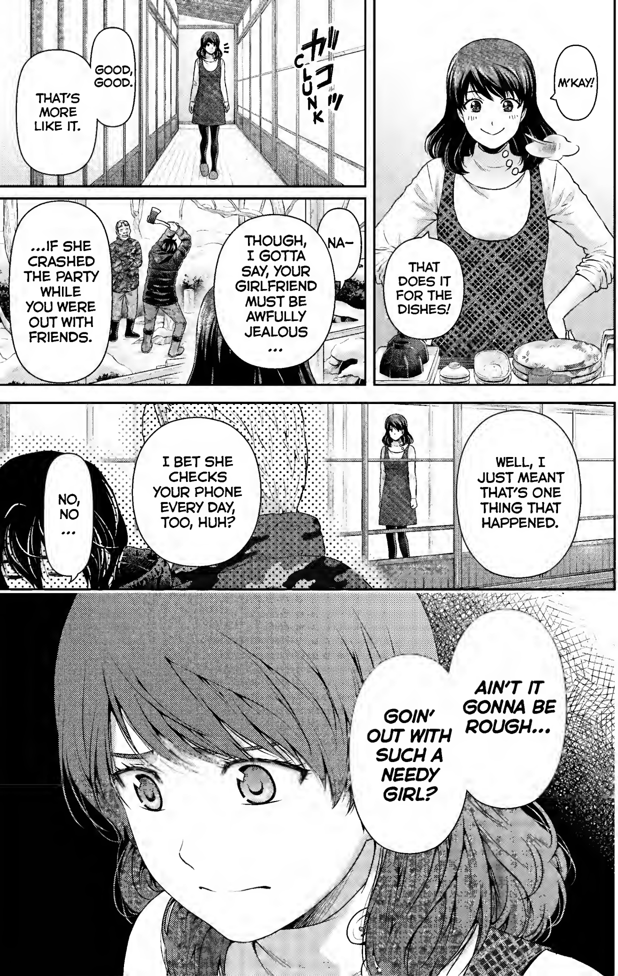

HUP...
IT'S PRETTY HEAVY, HUH?
YOU ALL RIGHT OVER THERE?
YEAH. I'LL BE FINE ONCE I GET THE HANG OF—
AGH!
ツルッ SLIP
ドッ WUMP
バッ FWOOッ
テッ
HEY! KNOCK IT OFF!
ベロ LICK
I DIDN'T FALL BECAUSE I WANTED TO PLAY!
ベロ LICK
ベロ LICK
DOWN, JIRO!
HE PROBABLY WON'T STOP UNLESS YOU PLAY WITH HIM FOR A LITTLE.
あ AH は HA はっ HA
ブン WAG
ブン WAG
OH.
Y'KNOW, THIS KIND OF THING MAKES IT FEEL LIKE...
...WE'RE A REAL "FAMILY."

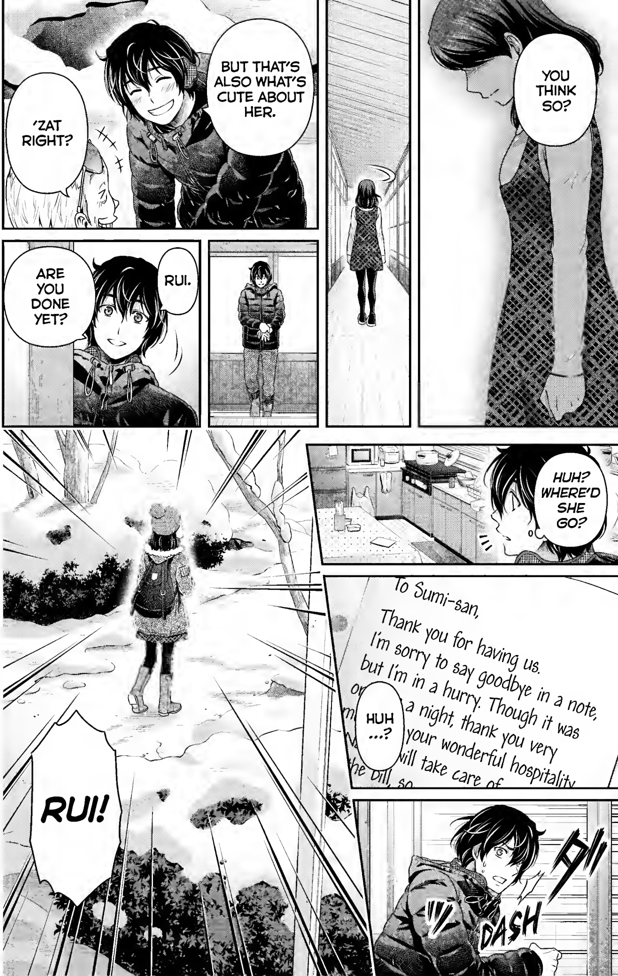

IF RUI AND I END UP HAVING A FAMILY SOMEDAY...
WE'RE HOME...
ワン! WOOF
ワン! WOOF
CAMEO BY JIRO
OH, GOD! YOU'RE BOTH COVERED IN MUD!
JIRO GOT A LITTLE EXCITED AT THE PARK...
LET'S GO GET YOU WASHED UP!
WHAT'VE WE TOLD YOU ABOUT JUMPING ON PEOPLE, JIRO?
ペろ LICK
ペろ LICK
HEY!
DON'T THINK YOU CAN BUTTER ME UP, MISTER!
MOM'S PRETTY HARSH, HUH, JIRO?
ワン! WOOF
HEY, DON'T MAKE ME THE BAD GUY!
THAT MIGHT BE NICE...
べロ LICK
べロ LICK
べロ LICK
べロ LICK
べロ LICK
べロ LICK
GET UP BEFORE HE LICKS YOUR FACE OFF...
SAY, MA'AM.
CALL ME SUMI, DEAR.
SUMI-SAN...
WHAT WAS YOUR HUSBAND LIKE?


GRANDPA, EH?
WELL ...
HE WAS A CLUMSY MAN WHEN HE WAS YOUNG, I SUPPOSE.
CLUMSY?
I MARRIED HIM BECAUSE HE WAS THE MAN I LOVED,
BUT IT WASN'T ALL SUNSHINE AND RAINBOWS.
THERE WAS THE TIME HE PILED UP A MOUNTAIN OF DEBT WITHOUT TELLING ME,
OR THE TIME HE UP AND QUIT HIS JOB OUT OF THE BLUE ONE DAY.
THEN THERE WERE HIS OCCASIONAL DRUNKEN OUTBURSTS ...
I'M STILL AMAZED WE MANAGED TO GET BY ALL THESE YEARS.
UM ...
DID YOU EVER THINK ABOUT...
...GETTING A DIVORCE?
A DIVORCE, EH?
IT DIDN'T USED TO BE SO EASY FOR COUPLES TO SPLIT UP BACK IN OUR DAY.
BUT,
I FEEL THAT IT'S ONLY BECAUSE WE OVERCAME SO MANY OBSTACLES TOGETHER OVER THE YEARS...


...THAT WE...
...WERE ABLE TO BECOME A *TRUE* COUPLE.
THAT'S WHY,
I'M GLAD WE STAYED TOGETHER THROUGH IT ALL.
A TRUE...
...COUPLE.
SORRY.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO MAKE YOU KIDS LISTEN TO THIS OLD GIRL REMINISCE.
WOULD YOU CARE FOR SECONDS?
OH. YES, PLEASE.
THAT WAS A LOVELY STORY.
IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE WE CAN DO TO HELP? I'D LIKE TO PAY YOU BACK FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE FOR US...
OH, MY.
THAT'S VERY SWEET OF YOU.
ドス FMP
ドス FMP
ドスッ FMP


I'M HOME!
ガ RATL
ラッ
PHEW... AUSTRALIA WAS A BLAST!
?!
WELCOME HOME, DEAR.
UM... DIDN'T YOU HUSBAND PASS AWAY...?
I NEVER SAID HE WAS DEAD.
HE WAS JUST ON A TRIP TO AUSTRALIA.
...
HOW WAS IT?
FANTASTIC! EVERYTHING WAS JUST A DYNAMITE TIME!
I'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOU WITH ME NEXT TIME!
I BROUGHT HOME SOUVENIRS!

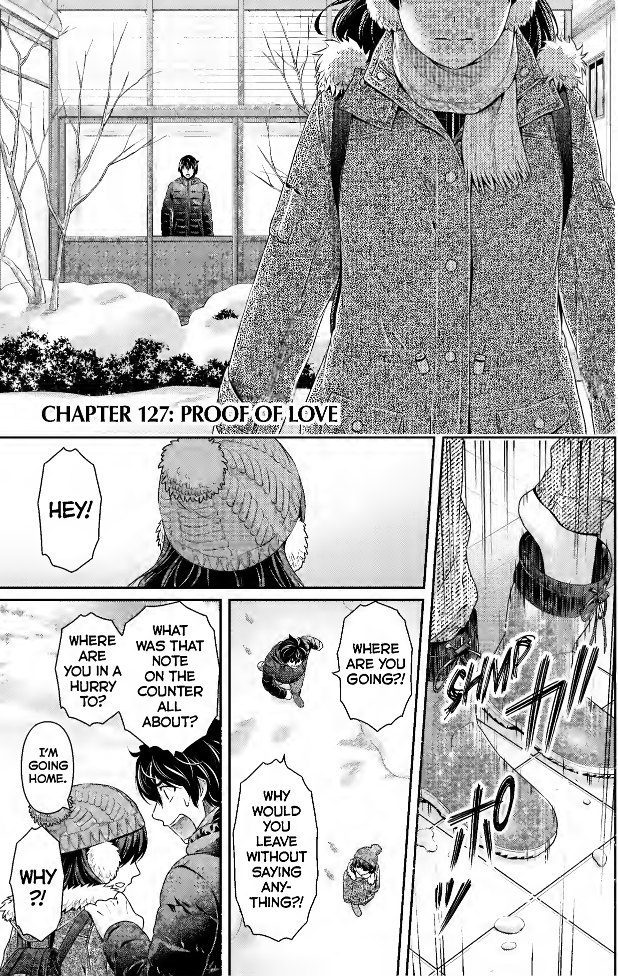

M'KAY!
THAT DOES IT FOR THE DISHES!
GOOD, GOOD.
THAT'S MORE LIKE IT.
カコッ
CLUNK
NA—
THOUGH, I GOTTA SAY, YOUR GIRLFRIEND MUST BE AWFULLY JEALOUS...
...IF SHE CRASHED THE PARTY WHILE YOU WERE OUT WITH FRIENDS.
WELL, I JUST MEANT THAT'S ONE THING THAT HAPPENED.
I BET SHE CHECKS YOUR PHONE EVERY DAY, TOO, HUH?
NO, NO...
AIN'T IT GONNA BE ROUGH...
GOIN' OUT WITH SUCH A NEEDY GIRL?

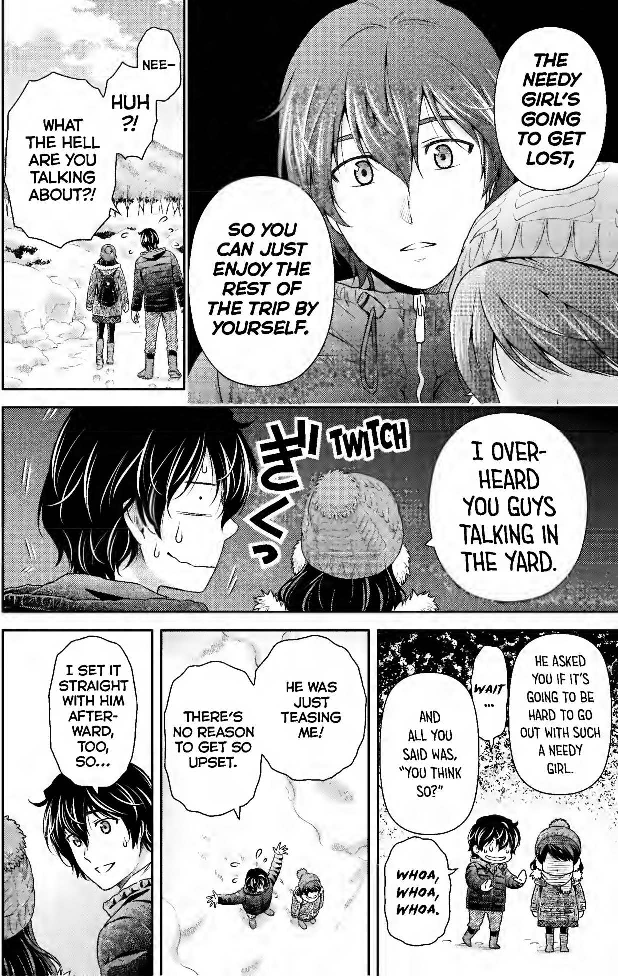

YOU THINK SO?
BUT THAT'S ALSO WHAT'S CUTE ABOUT HER.
'ZAT RIGHT?
RUI.
ARE YOU DONE YET?
HUH? WHERE'D SHE GO?
HUH ...?
DASH
RUI!

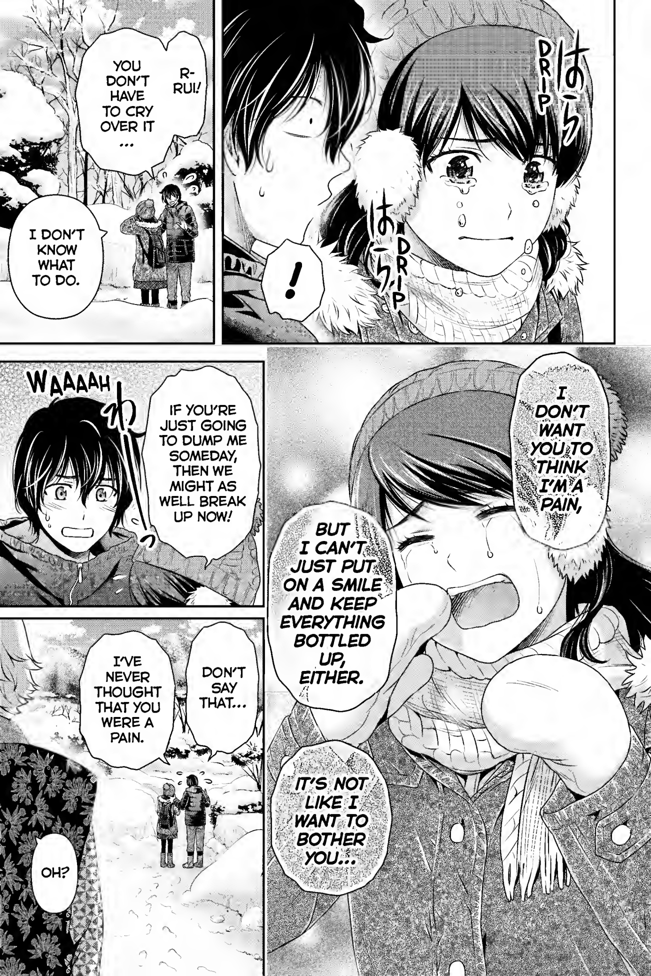
To Sumi-san,

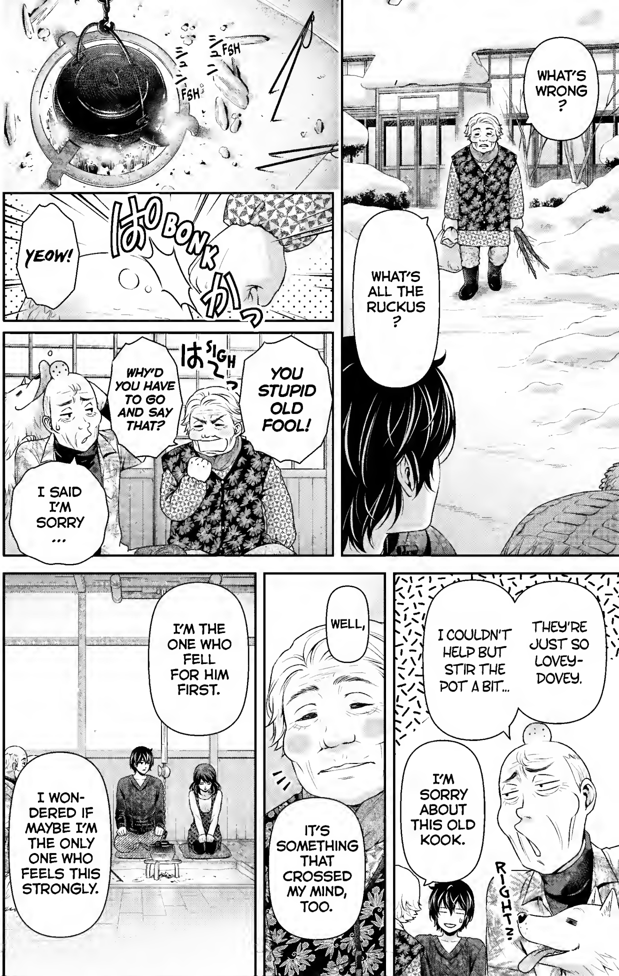
Thank you for having us.
I'm sorry to say goodbye in a note,
but I'm in a hurry. Though it was
or a night, thank you very
m your wonderful hospitality
ill take care of
the bill, so

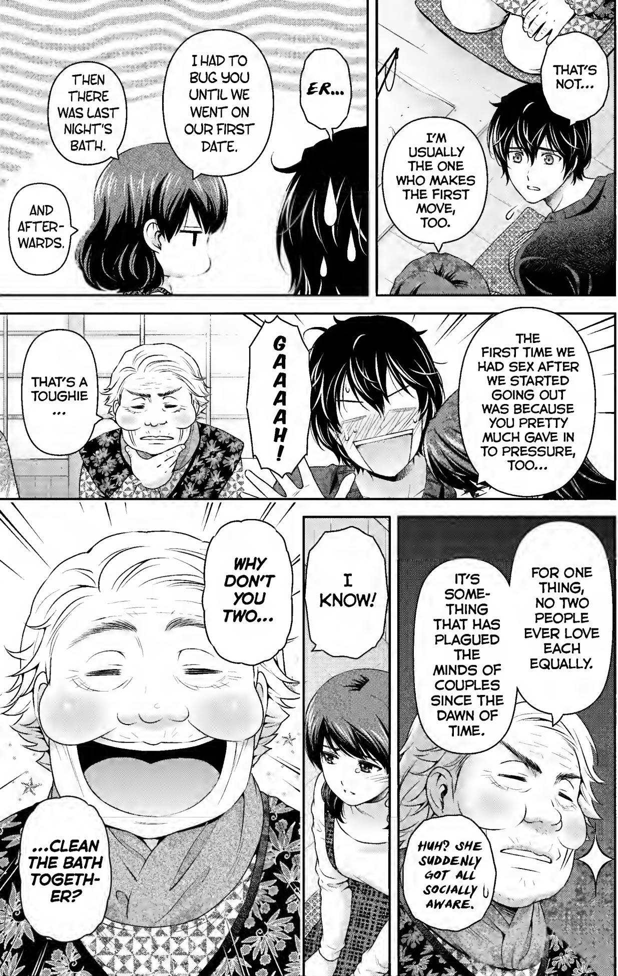
CHAPTER 127: PROOF OF LOVE

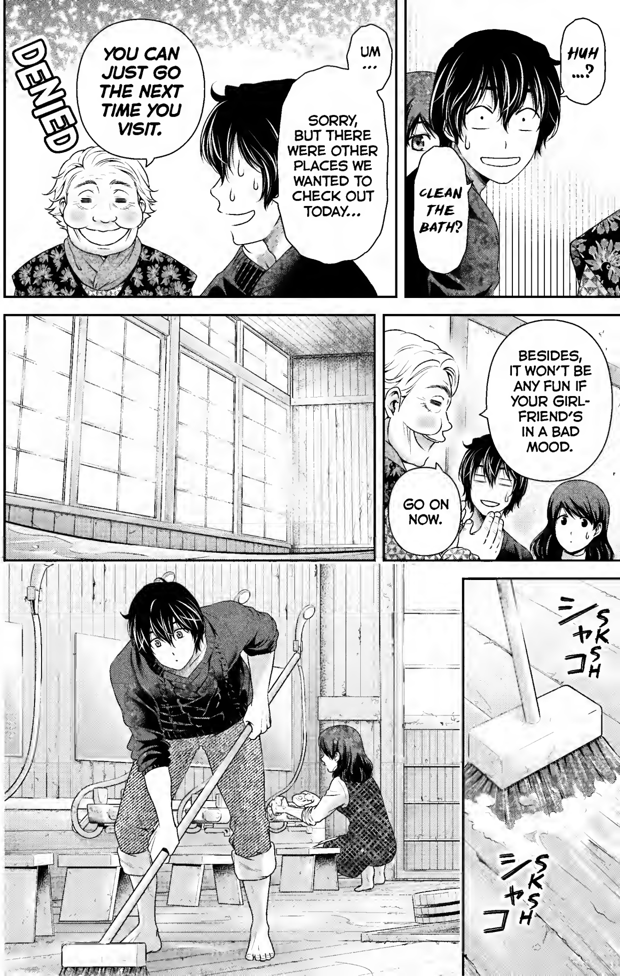

SHMP
TO
HEY!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
WHY WOULD YOU LEAVE WITHOUT SAYING ANY-THING?!
WHAT WAS THAT NOTE ON THE COUNTER ALL ABOUT?
WHERE ARE YOU IN A HURRY TO?
I'M GOING HOME.
WHY?!

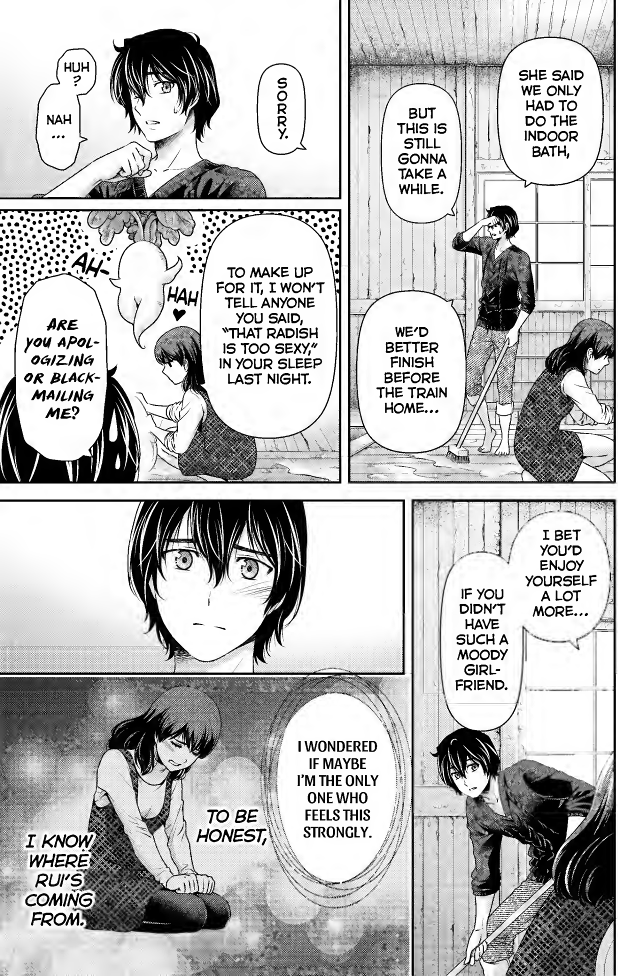

THE NEEDY GIRL'S GOING TO GET LOST,
SO YOU CAN JUST ENJOY THE REST OF THE TRIP BY YOURSELF.
NEE–
HUH ?!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
I OVERHEARD YOU GUYS TALKING IN THE YARD.
ぎくっ TWITCH
HE ASKED YOU IF IT'S GOING TO BE HARD TO GO OUT WITH SUCH A NEEDY GIRL.
WAIT...
AND ALL YOU SAID WAS, "YOU THINK SO?"
WHOA, WHOA, WHOA.
HE WAS JUST TEASING ME!
THERE'S NO REASON TO GET SO UPSET.
I SET IT STRAIGHT WITH HIM AFTERWARD, TOO, SO...

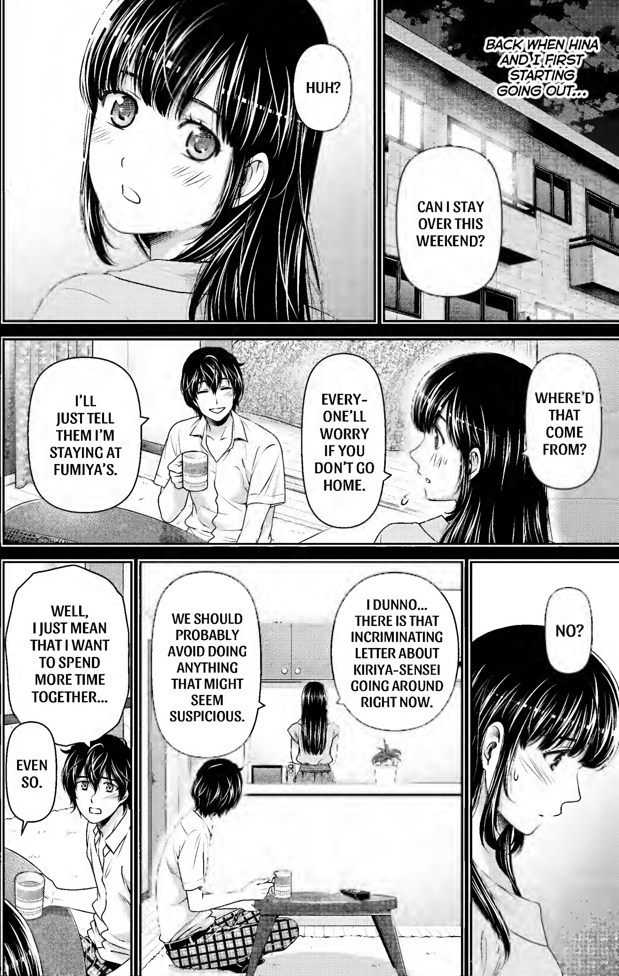

はら DRIP
はら DRIP
!
R-RUI!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO CRY OVER IT ...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK I'M A PAIN,
BUT I CAN'T JUST PUT ON A SMILE AND KEEP EVERYTHING BOTTLED UP, EITHER.
IT'S NOT LIKE I WANT TO BOTHER YOU...
わ WAAAAH
IF YOU'RE JUST GOING TO DUMP ME SOMEDAY, THEN WE MIGHT AS WELL BREAK UP NOW!
DON'T SAY THAT...
I'VE NEVER THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE A PAIN.
OH?

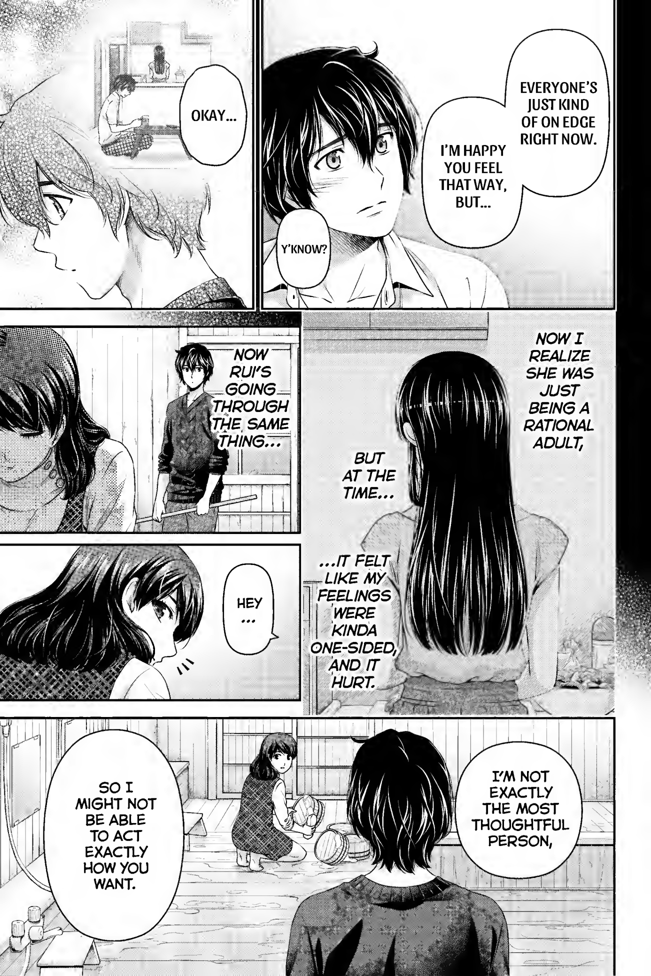

WHAT'S WRONG?
WHAT'S ALL THE RUCKUS?
シュ FSH
シュ FSH
YEOW!
ぽ BONK かっ
YOU STUPID OLD FOOL!
はぁ SIGH
WHY'D YOU HAVE TO GO AND SAY THAT?
I SAID I'M SORRY...
THEY'RE JUST SO LOVEY-DOVEY.
I COULDN'T HELP BUT STIR THE POT A BIT...
I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS OLD KOOK.
RIGHT?
WELL,
IT'S SOMETHING THAT CROSSED MY MIND, TOO.
I'M THE ONE WHO FELL FOR HIM FIRST.
I WONDERED IF MAYBE I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO FEELS THIS STRONGLY.

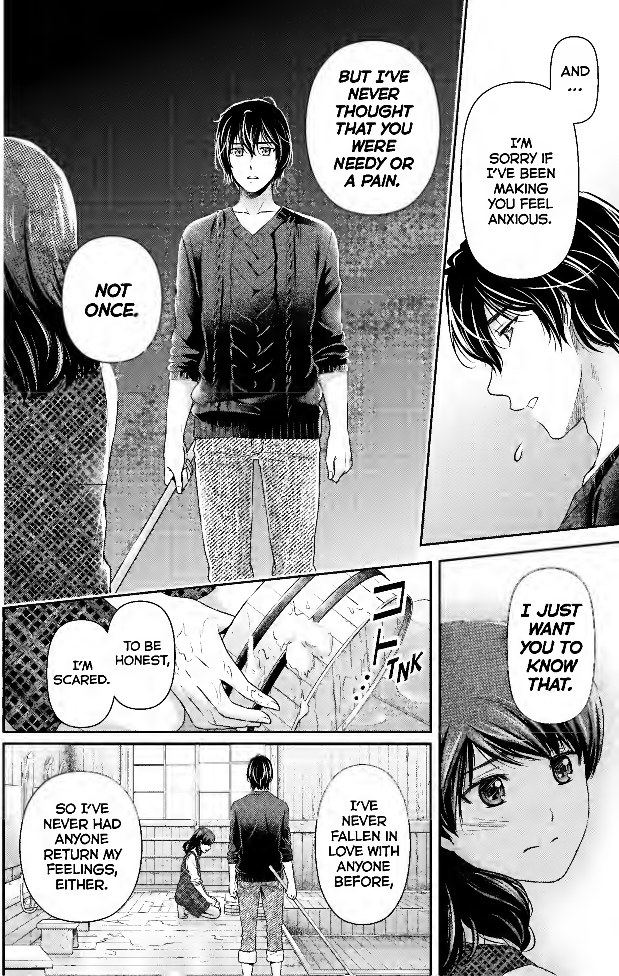

THAT'S NOT...
I'M USUALLY THE ONE WHO MAKES THE FIRST MOVE, TOO.
ER...
I HAD TO BUG YOU UNTIL WE WENT ON OUR FIRST DATE.
THEN THERE WAS LAST NIGHT'S BATH.
AND AFTERWARDS.
THE FIRST TIME WE HAD SEX AFTER WE STARTED GOING OUT WAS BECAUSE YOU PRETTY MUCH GAVE IN TO PRESSURE, TOO...
GAAAAH!
THAT'S A TOUGHIE...
FOR ONE THING, NO TWO PEOPLE EVER LOVE EACH EQUALLY.
IT'S SOMETHING THAT HAS PLAGUED THE MINDS OF COUPLES SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME.
HUH? SHE SUDDENLY GOT ALL SOCIALLY AWARE.
I KNOW!
WHY DON'T YOU TWO...
...CLEAN THE BATH TOGETHER?

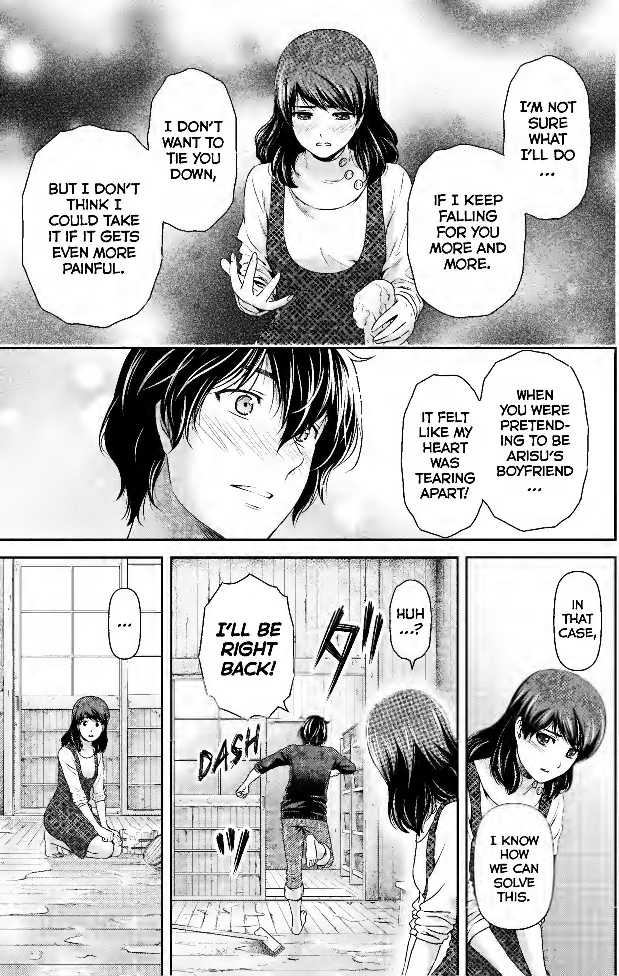

HUH ...?
CLEAN THE BATH?
UM ...
SORRY, BUT THERE WERE OTHER PLACES WE WANTED TO CHECK OUT TODAY...
YOU CAN JUST GO THE NEXT TIME YOU VISIT.
DENIED
BESIDES, IT WON'T BE ANY FUN IF YOUR GIRLFRIEND'S IN A BAD MOOD.
GO ON NOW.
シャコ SKSH
シャコ SKSH

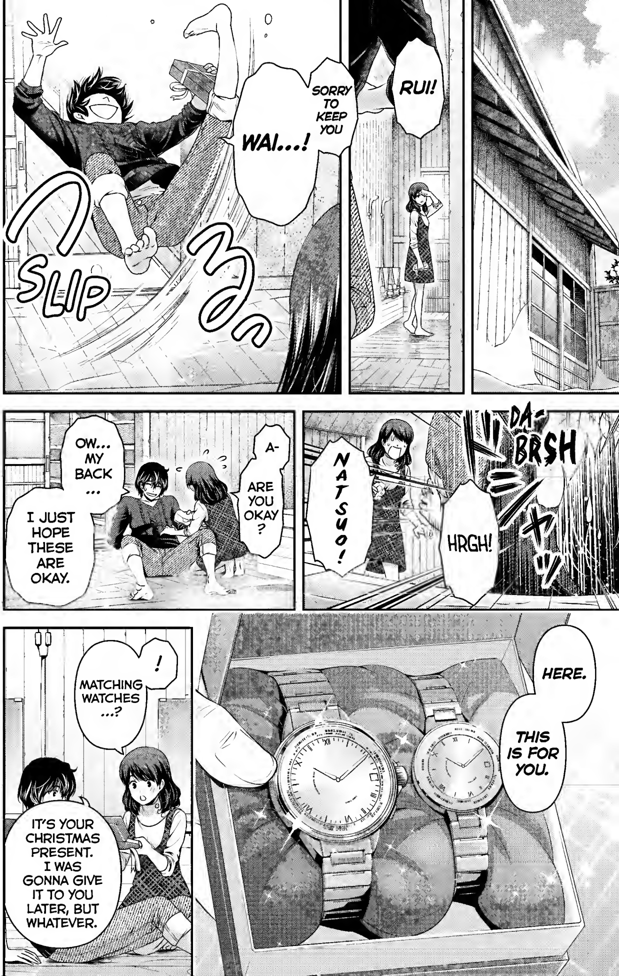

SHE SAID WE ONLY HAD TO DO THE INDOOR BATH,
BUT THIS IS STILL GONNA TAKE A WHILE.
WE'D BETTER FINISH BEFORE THE TRAIN HOME...
SORRY.
HUH? NAH...
TO MAKE UP FOR IT, I WON'T TELL ANYONE YOU SAID, "THAT RADISH IS TOO SEXY," IN YOUR SLEEP LAST NIGHT.
AH-HAH ♥
ARE YOU APOLOGIZING OR BLACKMAILING ME?
I BET YOU'D ENJOY YOURSELF A LOT MORE...
IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE SUCH A MOODY GIRLFRIEND.
I WONDERED IF MAYBE I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO FEELS THIS STRONGLY.
TO BE HONEST,
I KNOW WHERE RUI'S COMING FROM.

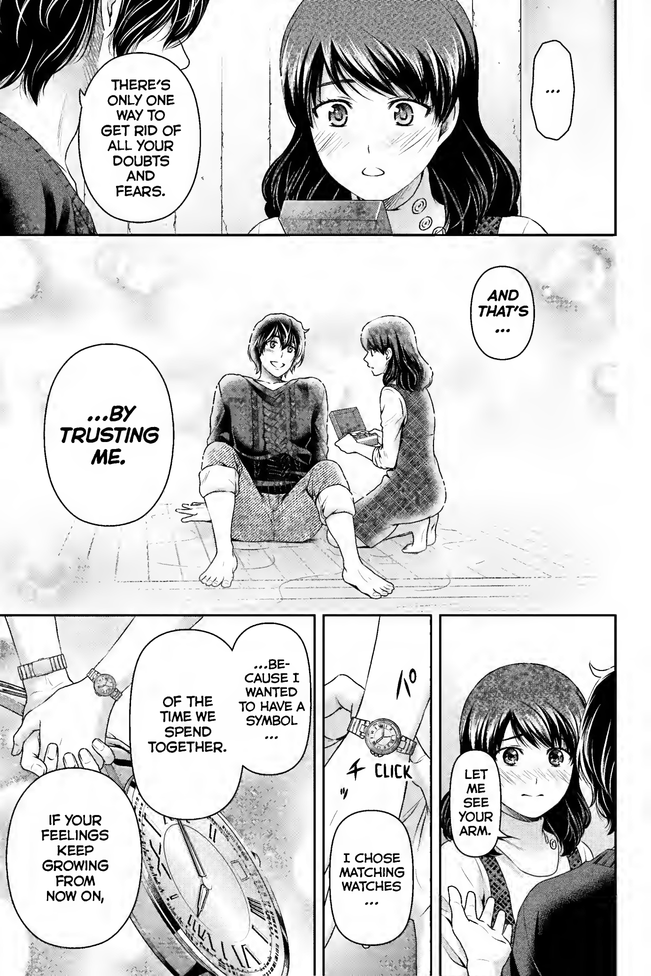

BACK WHEN HINA AND I FIRST STARTING GOING OUT...
CAN I STAY OVER THIS WEEKEND?
HUH?
WHERE'D THAT COME FROM?
EVERY-ONE'LL WORRY IF YOU DON'T GO HOME.
I'LL JUST TELL THEM I'M STAYING AT FUMIYA'S.
NO?
I DUNNO... THERE IS THAT INCRIMINATING LETTER ABOUT KIRIYA-SENSEI GOING AROUND RIGHT NOW.
WE SHOULD PROBABLY AVOID DOING ANYTHING THAT MIGHT SEEM SUSPICIOUS.
WELL, I JUST MEAN THAT I WANT TO SPEND MORE TIME TOGETHER...
EVEN SO.

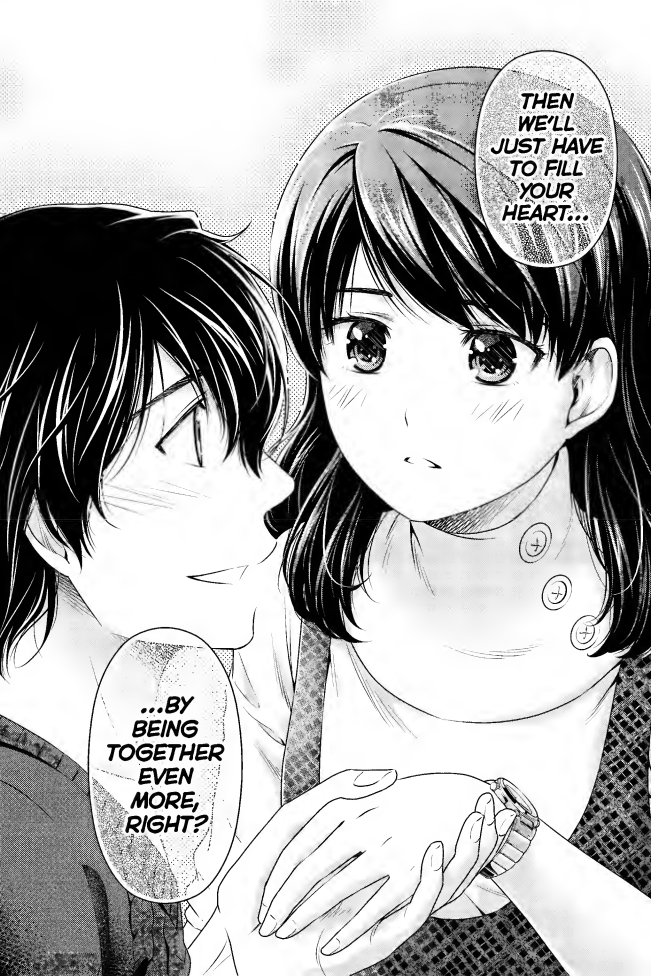

EVERYONE'S JUST KIND OF ON EDGE RIGHT NOW.
I'M HAPPY YOU FEEL THAT WAY, BUT...
Y'KNOW?
OKAY...
NOW I REALIZE SHE WAS JUST BEING A RATIONAL ADULT,
BUT AT THE TIME...
...IT FELT LIKE MY FEELINGS WERE KINDA ONE-SIDED, AND IT HURT.
NOW RUI'S GOING THROUGH THE SAME THING...
HEY ...
I'M NOT EXACTLY THE MOST THOUGHTFUL PERSON,
SO I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO ACT EXACTLY HOW YOU WANT.

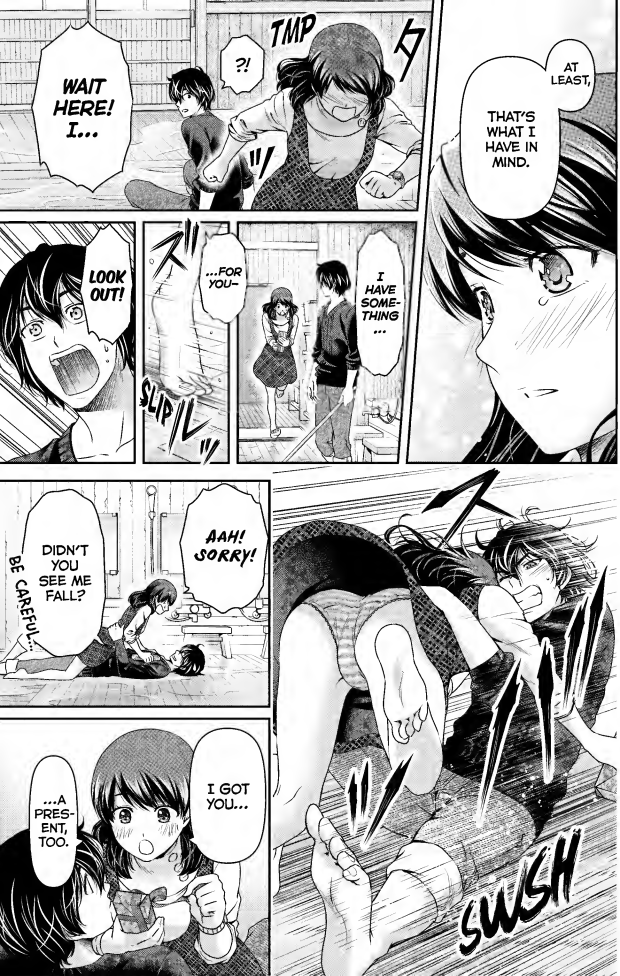

AND ...
I'M SORRY IF I'VE BEEN MAKING YOU FEEL ANXIOUS.
BUT I'VE NEVER THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE NEEDY OR A PAIN.
NOT ONCE.
I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT.
コト
TNK
TO BE HONEST,
I'M SCARED.
I'VE NEVER FALLEN IN LOVE WITH ANYONE BEFORE,
SO I'VE NEVER HAD ANYONE RETURN MY FEELINGS, EITHER.

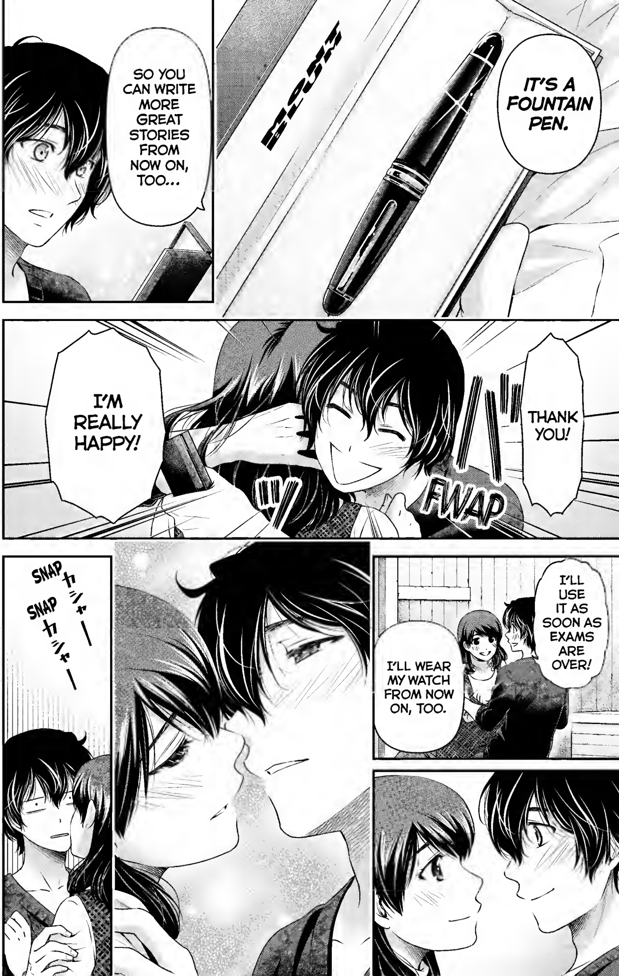

I'M NOT SURE WHAT I'LL DO ...
IF I KEEP FALLING FOR YOU MORE AND MORE.
I DON'T WANT TO TIE YOU DOWN,
BUT I DON'T THINK I COULD TAKE IT IF IT GETS EVEN MORE PAINFUL.
WHEN YOU WERE PRETENDING TO BE ARISU'S BOYFRIEND ...
IT FELT LIKE MY HEART WAS TEARING APART!
IN THAT CASE,
I KNOW HOW WE CAN SOLVE THIS.
HUH ...?
ダッ
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
DASH
...

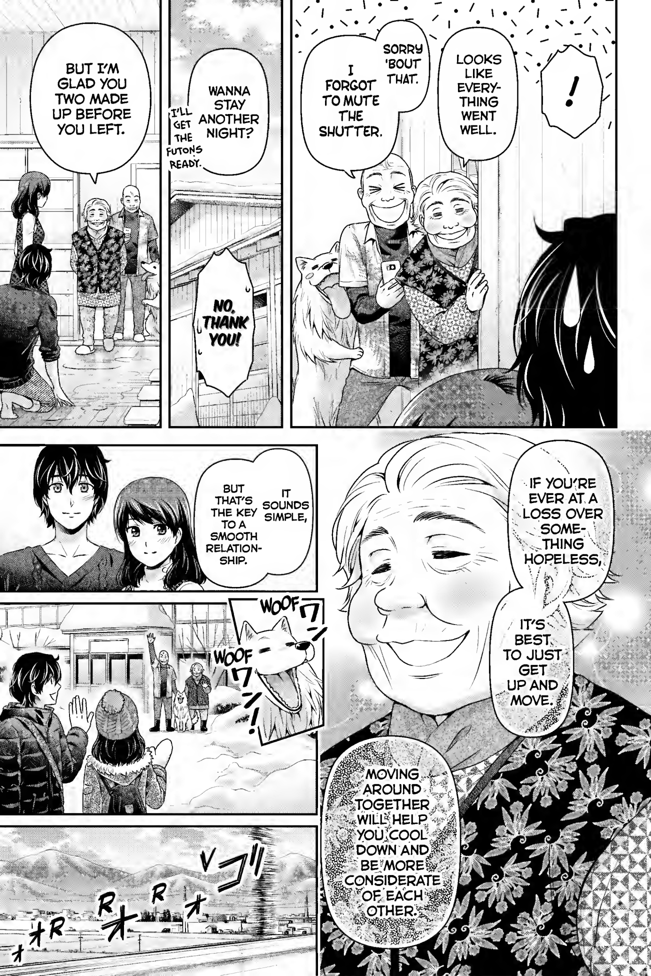

RUI!
SORRY TO KEEP YOU
WAI...!
SLIP
DA-BRSH
HRGH!
NATSUO!
A-
ARE YOU OKAY?
OW... MY BACK...
I JUST HOPE THESE ARE OKAY.
HERE.
THIS IS FOR YOU.
!
MATCHING WATCHES...?
IT'S YOUR CHRISTMAS PRESENT. I WAS GONNA GIVE IT TO YOU LATER, BUT WHATEVER.

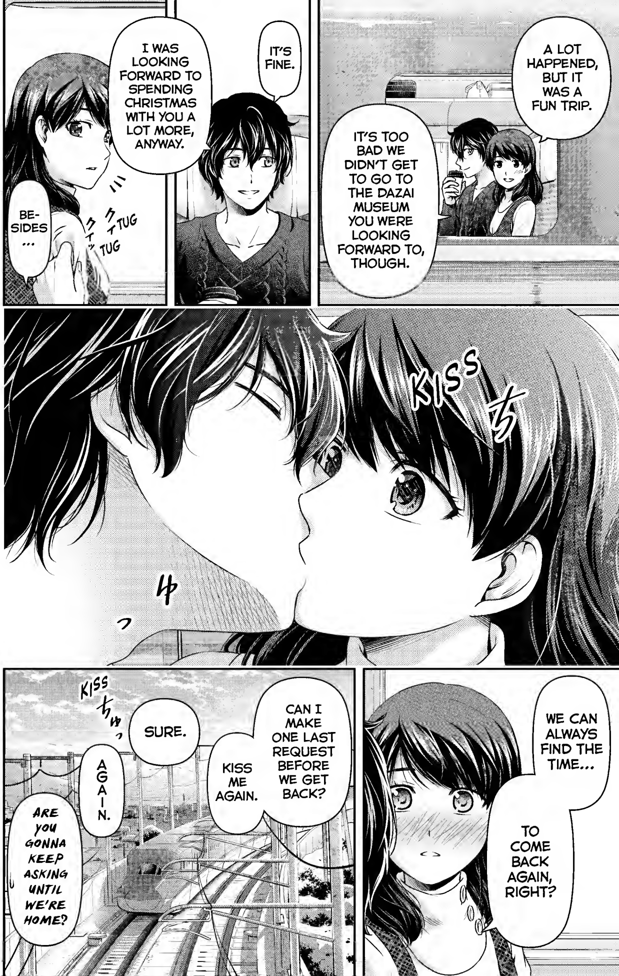

...
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO GET RID OF ALL YOUR DOUBTS AND FEARS.
AND THAT'S ...
...BY TRUSTING ME.
LET ME SEE YOUR ARM.
パ
チ CLICK
ッ
I CHOSE MATCHING WATCHES ...
...BECAUSE I WANTED TO HAVE A SYMBOL ...
OF THE TIME WE SPEND TOGETHER.
IF YOUR FEELINGS KEEP GROWING FROM NOW ON,


THEN WE'LL JUST HAVE TO FILL YOUR HEART...
...BY BEING TOGETHER EVEN MORE, RIGHT?


AT LEAST,
THAT'S WHAT I HAVE IN MIND.
TMP
?!
WAIT HERE! I...
I HAVE SOMETHING...
...FOR YOU-
SLIP
LOOK OUT!
SWISH
AAH! SORRY!
DIDN'T YOU SEE ME FALL?
BE CAREFUL...
I GOT YOU...
...A PRESENT, TOO.

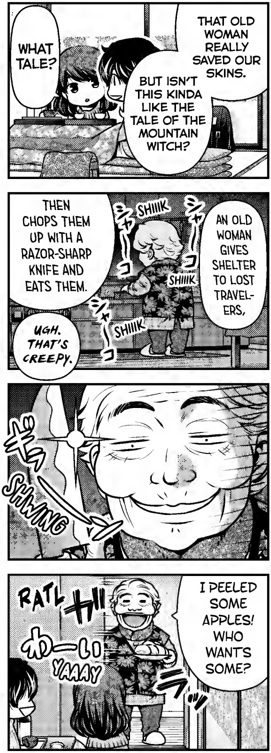

IT'S A FOUNTAIN PEN.
SO YOU CAN WRITE MORE GREAT STORIES FROM NOW ON, TOO...
THANK YOU!
FWAP
I'M REALLY HAPPY!
I'LL USE IT AS SOON AS EXAMS ARE OVER!
I'LL WEAR MY WATCH FROM NOW ON, TOO.
SNAP カシャー
SNAP カシャー


!
LOOKS LIKE EVERYTHING WENT WELL.
SORRY 'BOUT THAT.
I FORGOT TO MUTE THE SHUTTER.
WANNA STAY ANOTHER NIGHT?
I'LL GET THE FUTONS READY.
NO, THANK YOU!
BUT I'M GLAD YOU TWO MADE UP BEFORE YOU LEFT.
IF YOU'RE EVER AT A LOSS OVER SOMETHING HOPELESS,
IT'S BEST TO JUST GET UP AND MOVE.
MOVING AROUND TOGETHER WILL HELP YOU COOL DOWN AND BE MORE CONSIDERATE OF EACH OTHER.
IT SOUNDS SIMPLE,
BUT THAT'S THE KEY TO A SMOOTH RELATIONSHIP.
WOOF ワン
WOOF ワン!
V ゴ
R オ R オ R オ


A LOT HAPPENED, BUT IT WAS A FUN TRIP.
IT'S TOO BAD WE DIDN'T GET TO GO TO THE DAZAI MUSEUM YOU WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO, THOUGH.
IT'S FINE.
I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO SPENDING CHRISTMAS WITH YOU A LOT MORE, ANYWAY.
クイッ TUG
クイッ TUG
BESIDES...
KISS ち
ゅっ
WE CAN ALWAYS FIND THE TIME...
TO COME BACK AGAIN, RIGHT?
CAN I MAKE ONE LAST REQUEST BEFORE WE GET BACK?
KISS ME AGAIN.
SURE.
KISS ちゅっ
AGAIN.
ARE YOU GONNA KEEP ASKING UNTIL WE'RE HOME?

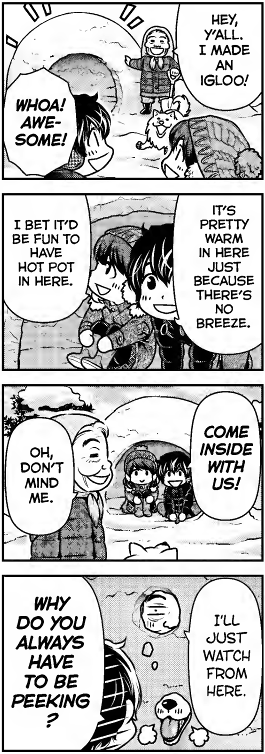
DOMEGIRL 4-PANEL THEATER

MOUNTAIN WITCH

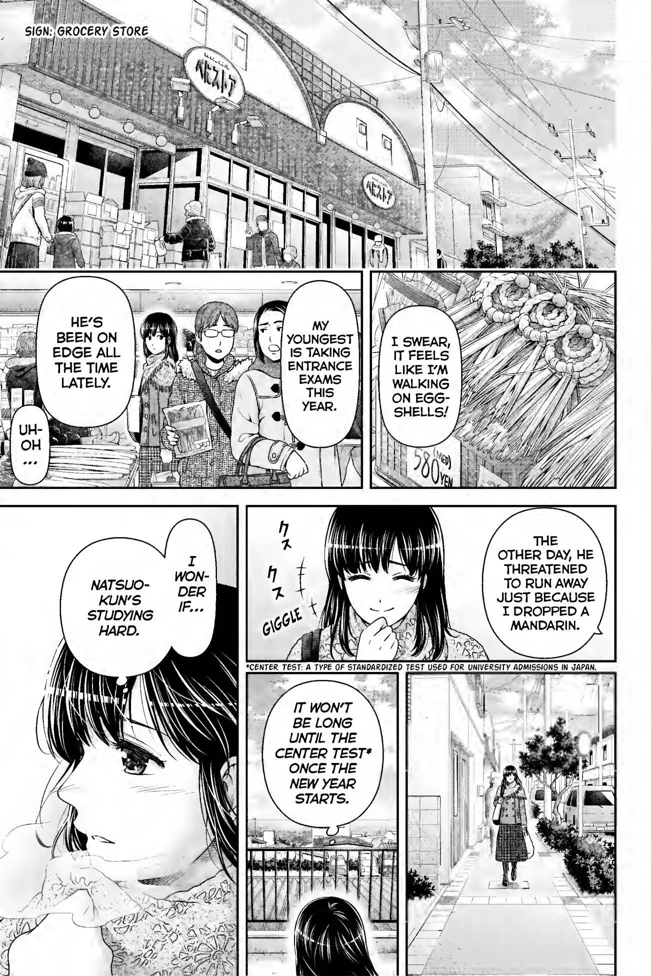

THAT OLD WOMAN REALLY SAVED OUR SKINS.
BUT ISN'T THIS KINDA LIKE THE TALE OF THE MOUNTAIN WITCH?
WHAT TALE?
AN OLD WOMAN GIVES SHELTER TO LOST TRAVELERS,
シャーコ SHIIIK
シャーコ SHIIIK
シャーコ SHIIIK
THEN CHOPS THEM UP WITH A RAZOR-SHARP KNIFE AND EATS THEM.
UGH. THAT'S CREEPY.
ギラ SHWING
I PEELED SOME APPLES! WHO WANTS SOME?
ガラ RATL
わーい YAAAY

PEACEFUL.

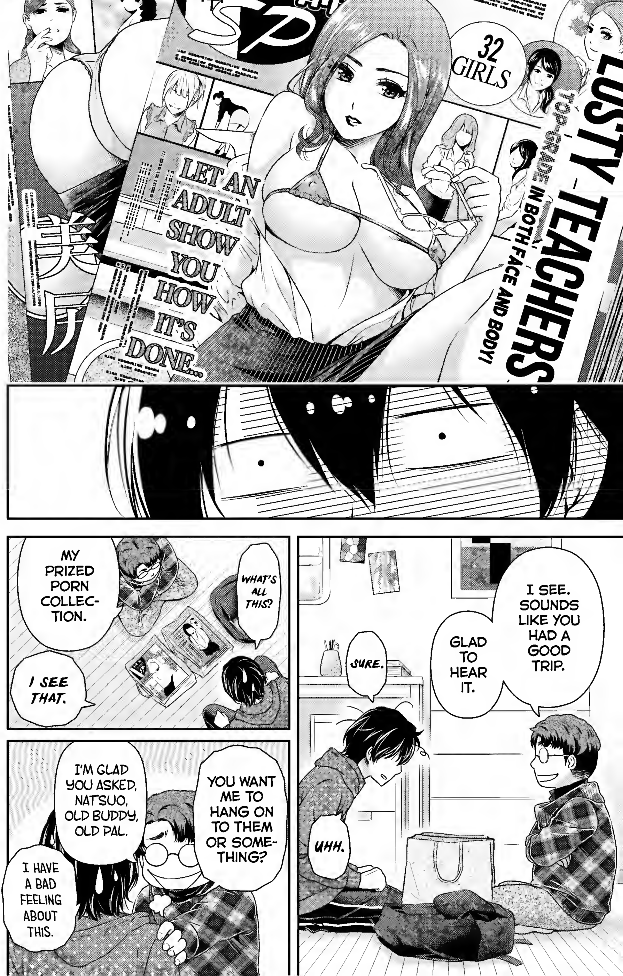
IGLOO

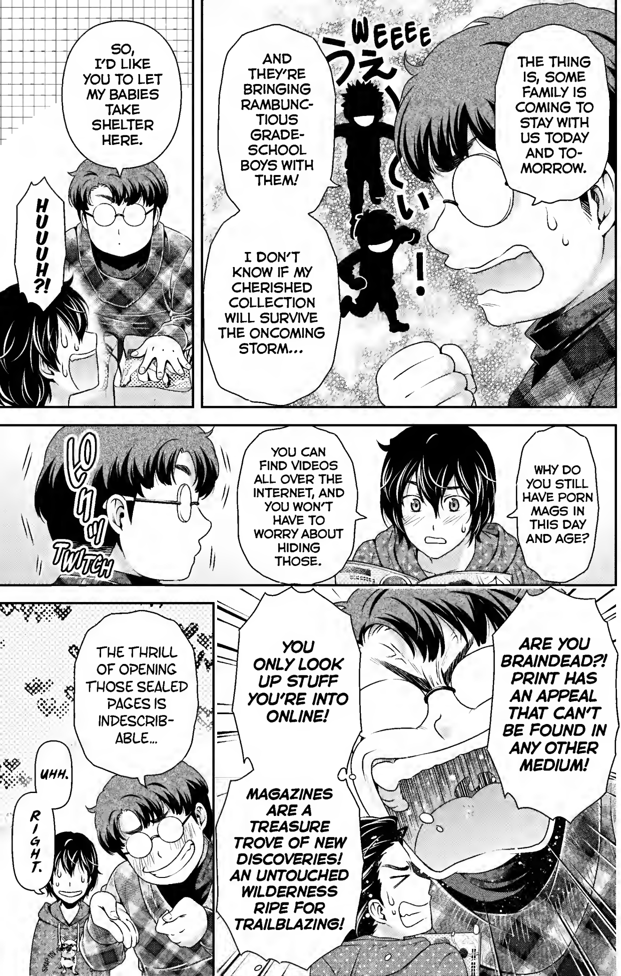

HEY, Y'ALL. I MADE AN IGLOO!
WHOA! AWESOME!
IT'S PRETTY WARM IN HERE JUST BECAUSE THERE'S NO BREEZE.
I BET IT'D BE FUN TO HAVE HOT POT IN HERE.
COME INSIDE WITH US!
OH, DON'T MIND ME.
I'LL JUST WATCH FROM HERE.
WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE PEEKING?

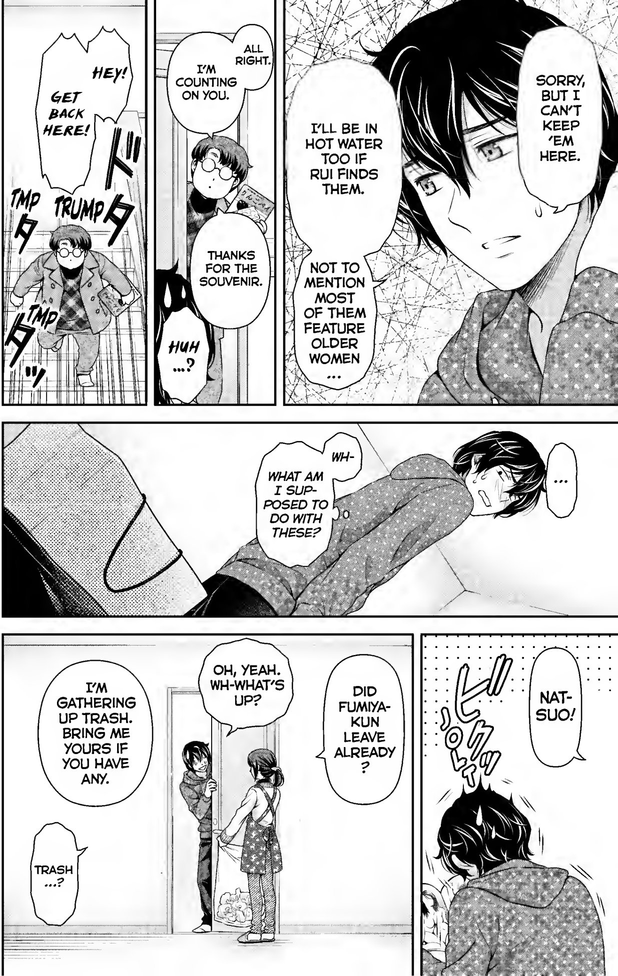
CHAPTER 128: PEACH CAMOUFLAGE

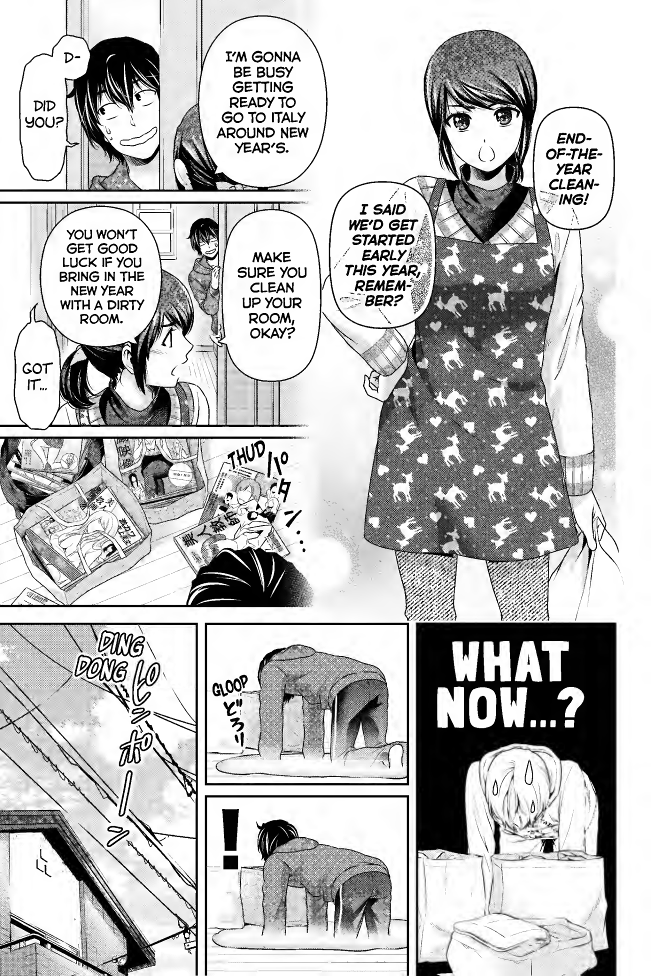

SIGN: GROCERY STORE
I SWEAR, IT FEELS LIKE I'M WALKING ON EGG-SHELLS!
580 (MED) YEN
MY YOUNGEST IS TAKING ENTRANCE EXAMS THIS YEAR.
HE'S BEEN ON EDGE ALL THE TIME LATELY.
UH-OH ...
THE OTHER DAY, HE THREATENED TO RUN AWAY JUST BECAUSE I DROPPED A MANDARIN.
クス クス
GIGGLE
I WONDER IF...
NATSUO-KUN'S STUDYING HARD.
IT WON'T BE LONG UNTIL THE CENTER TEST* ONCE THE NEW YEAR STARTS.

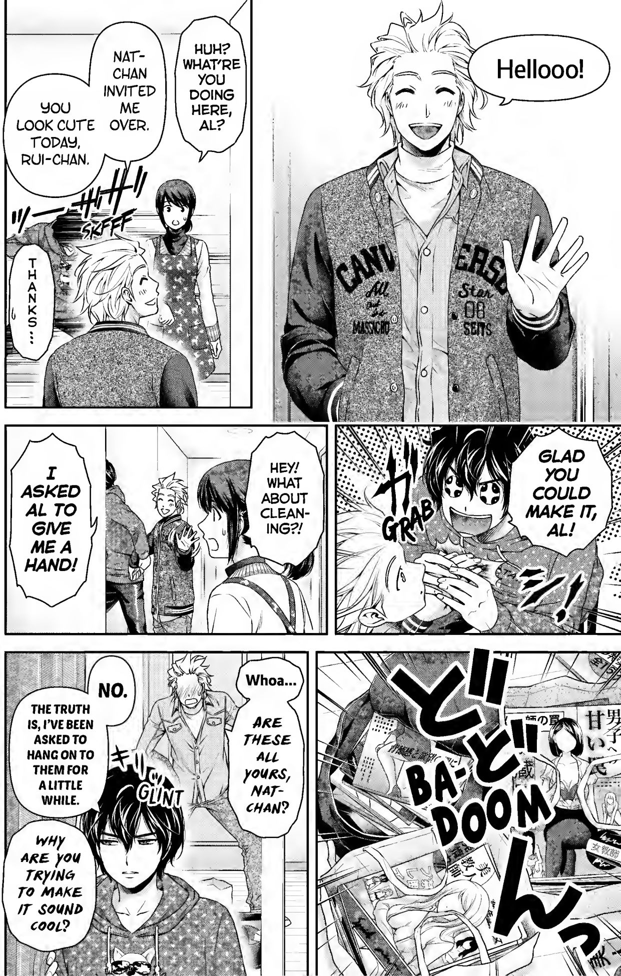
*CENTER TEST: A TYPE OF STANDARDIZED TEST USED FOR UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS IN JAPAN.

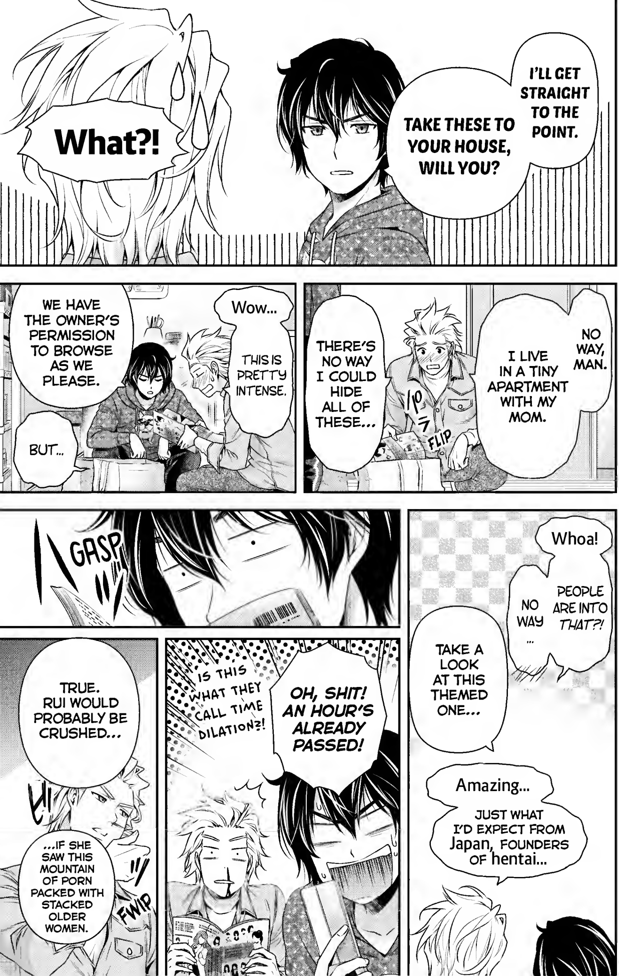

LUSTY TEACHERS
TOP-GRADE IN BOTH FACE AND BODY!
32 GIRLS
LET AN ADULT SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE...
美
I SEE. SOUNDS LIKE YOU HAD A GOOD TRIP.
GLAD TO HEAR IT.
SURE.
UHH.
WHAT'S ALL THIS?
MY PRIZED PORN COLLECTION.
I SEE THAT.
YOU WANT ME TO HANG ON TO THEM OR SOMETHING?
I'M GLAD YOU ASKED, NATSUO, OLD BUDDY, OLD PAL.
I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.

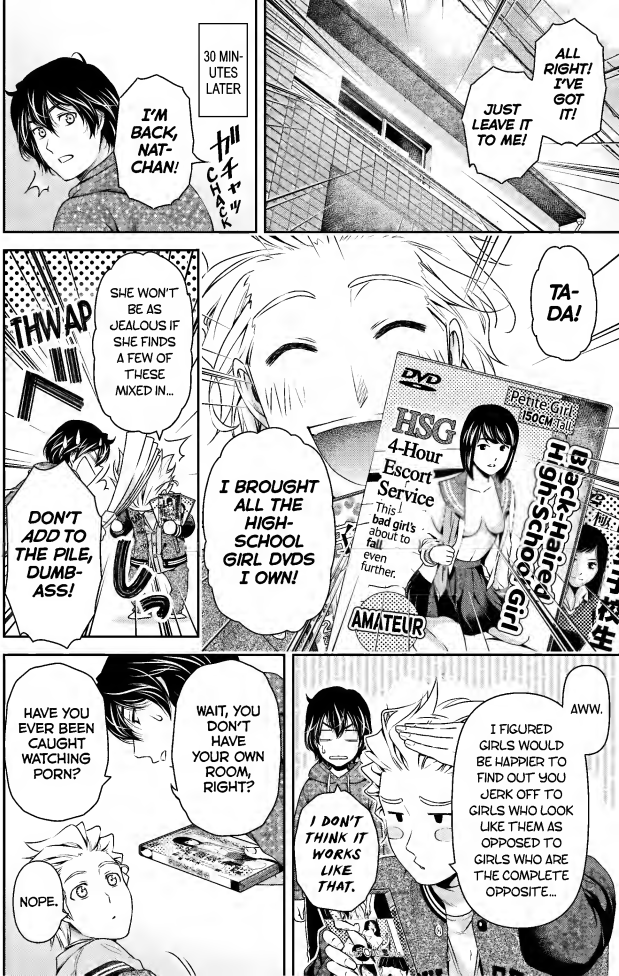

THE THING IS, SOME FAMILY IS COMING TO STAY WITH US TODAY AND TOMORROW.
WEEEE
うぇ〜い!
AND THEY'RE BRINGING RAMBUNCTIOUS GRADE-SCHOOL BOYS WITH THEM!
I DON'T KNOW IF MY CHERISHED COLLECTION WILL SURVIVE THE ONCOMING STORM...
SO, I'D LIKE YOU TO LET MY BABIES TAKE SHELTER HERE.
HUUUUH?!
WHY DO YOU STILL HAVE PORN MAGS IN THIS DAY AND AGE?
YOU CAN FIND VIDEOS ALL OVER THE INTERNET, AND YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HIDING THOSE.
ピクッ
TWITCH
ARE YOU BRAINDEAD?! PRINT HAS AN APPEAL THAT CAN'T BE FOUND IN ANY OTHER MEDIUM!
YOU ONLY LOOK UP STUFF YOU'RE INTO ONLINE!
MAGAZINES ARE A TREASURE TROVE OF NEW DISCOVERIES! AN UNTOUCHED WILDERNESS RIPE FOR TRAILBLAZING!
THE THRILL OF OPENING THOSE SEALED PAGES IS INDESCRIBABLE...
UHH. RIGHT.

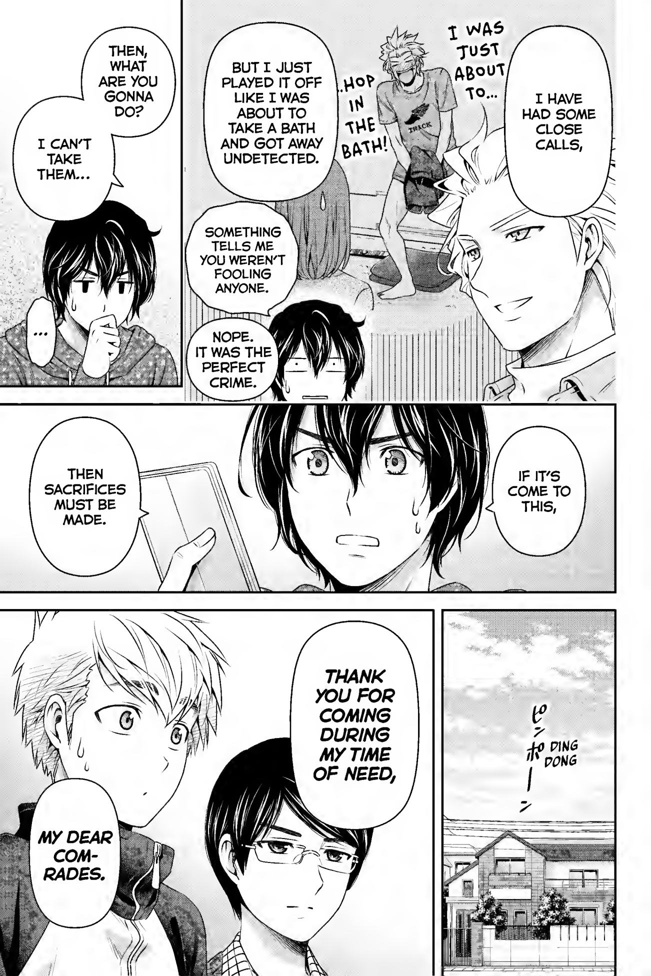

SORRY, BUT I CAN'T KEEP 'EM HERE.
I'LL BE IN HOT WATER TOO IF RUI FINDS THEM.
NOT TO MENTION MOST OF THEM FEATURE OLDER WOMEN...
ALL RIGHT.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
THANKS FOR THE SOUVENIR.
HUH...?
HEY!
GET BACK HERE!
ド
TMP TRUMP タ
タ
TMP タッ
...
WH- WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THESE?
NATSUO!
ビクッ
DID FUMIYA-KUN LEAVE ALREADY?
OH, YEAH. WH-WHAT'S UP?
I'M GATHERING UP TRASH. BRING ME YOURS IF YOU HAVE ANY.
TRASH...?

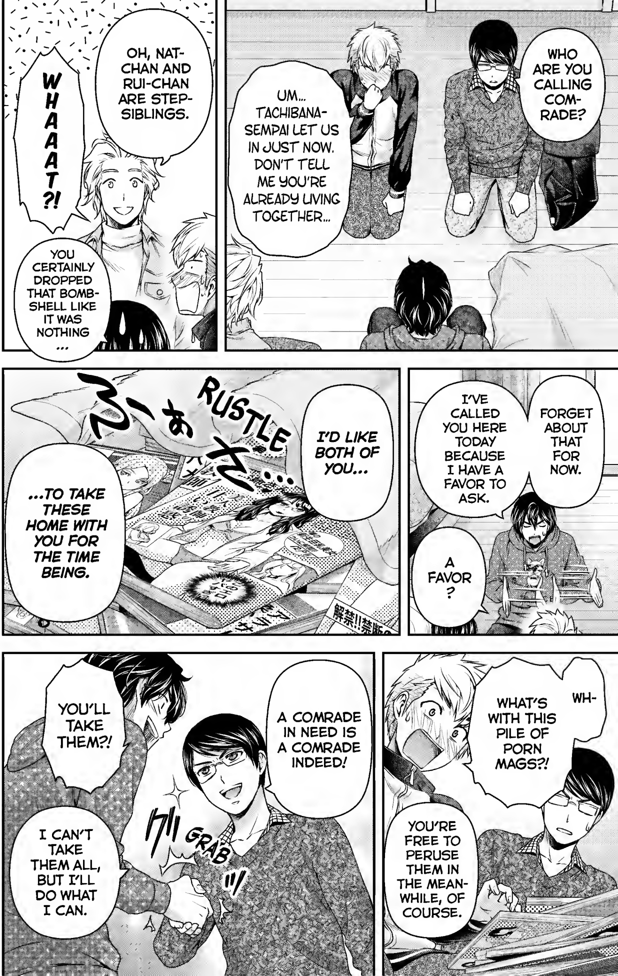

END-OF-THE-YEAR CLEANING!
I SAID WE'D GET STARTED EARLY THIS YEAR, REMEMBER?
I'M GONNA BE BUSY GETTING READY TO GO TO ITALY AROUND NEW YEAR'S.
D- DID YOU?
MAKE SURE YOU CLEAN UP YOUR ROOM, OKAY?
YOU WON'T GET GOOD LUCK IF YOU BRING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH A DIRTY ROOM.
GOT IT...
THUD
パタン…
WHAT NOW...?
GLOOP
どろり
!
DING DONG
ピンポーーン

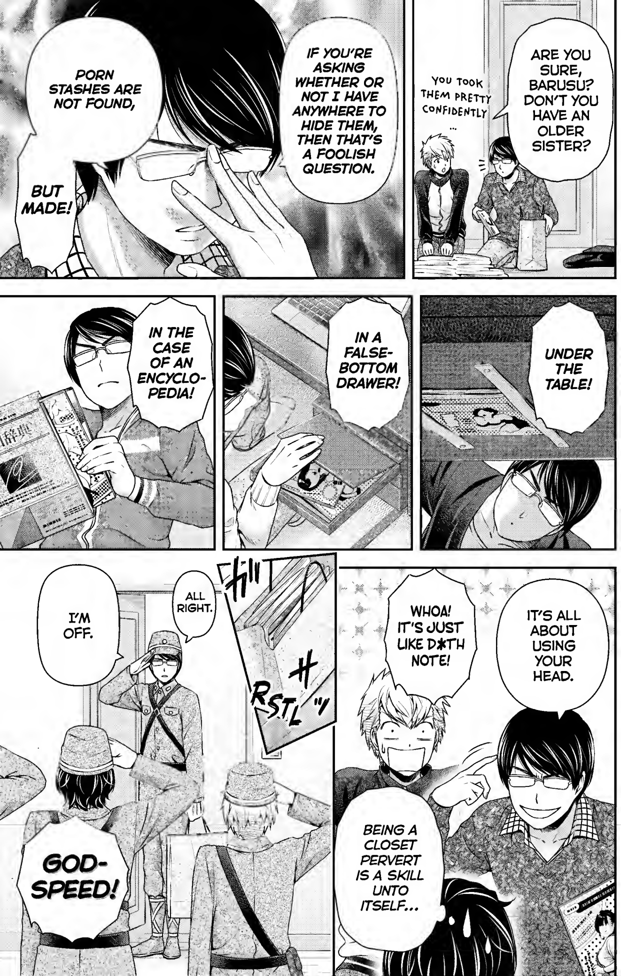

Hellooo!
HUH? WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE, AL?
NAT-CHAN INVITED ME OVER.
YOU LOOK CUTE TODAY, RUI-CHAN.
SKFFF
THANKS...
GRAB
GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT, AL!
HEY! WHAT ABOUT CLEANING?!
I ASKED AL TO GIVE ME A HAND!
BA-DOOM
Whoa...
ARE THESE ALL YOURS, NAT-CHAN?
NO.
THE TRUTH IS, I'VE BEEN ASKED TO HANG ON TO THEM FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
GLINT
WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE IT SOUND COOL?

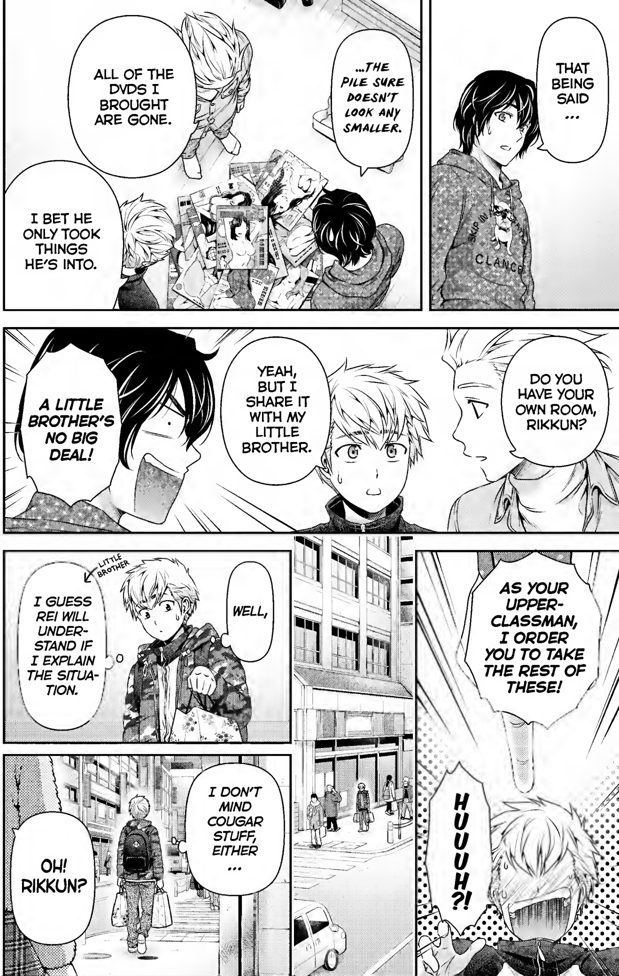

I'LL GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT.
TAKE THESE TO YOUR HOUSE, WILL YOU?
What?!
NO WAY, MAN.
I LIVE IN A TINY APARTMENT WITH MY MOM.
THERE'S NO WAY I COULD HIDE ALL OF THESE...
FLIP
Wow...
THIS IS PRETTY INTENSE.
WE HAVE THE OWNER'S PERMISSION TO BROWSE AS WE PLEASE.
BUT...
Whoa!
PEOPLE ARE INTO THAT?!
NO WAY...
TAKE A LOOK AT THIS THEMED ONE...
Amazing...
JUST WHAT I'D EXPECT FROM Japan, FOUNDERS OF hentai...
GASP
OH, SHIT! AN HOUR'S ALREADY PASSED!
IS THIS WHAT THEY CALL TIME DILATION?!
TRUE. RUI WOULD PROBABLY BE CRUSHED...
...IF SHE SAW THIS MOUNTAIN OF PORN PACKED WITH STACKED OLDER WOMEN.
FWIP

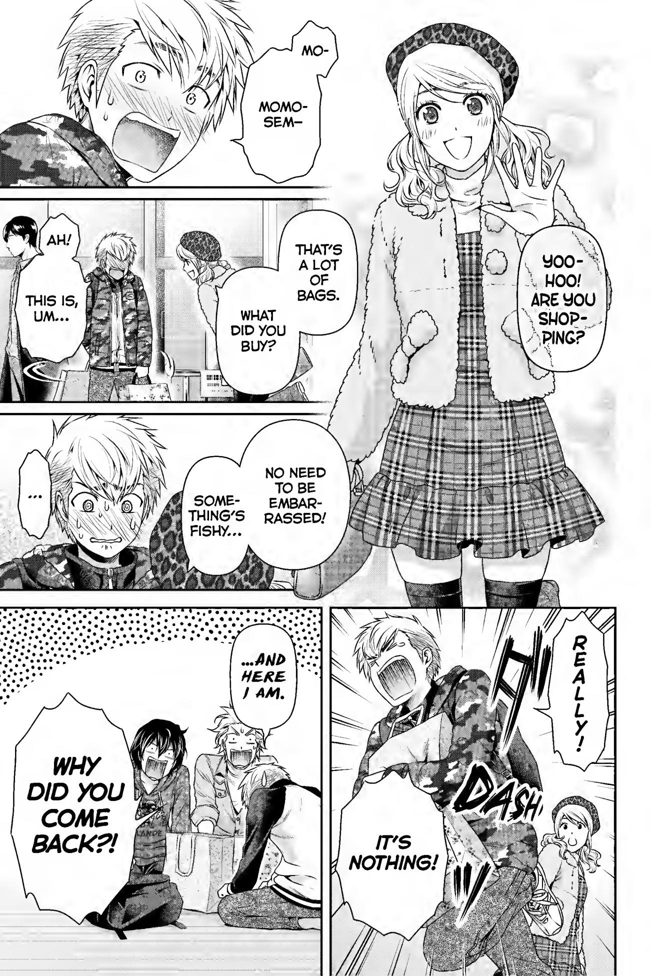

ALL RIGHT! I'VE GOT IT!
JUST LEAVE IT TO ME!
30 MINUTES LATER
ガチャッ
CHACK
I'M BACK, NAT-CHAN!
TA-DA!
I BROUGHT ALL THE HIGH-SCHOOL GIRL DVDS I OWN!
DVD
Petite Girl 150CM Tall
HSG
4-Hour Escort Service
This bad girl's about to fall even further.
AMATEUR
Black-Haired High-School Girl
SHE WON'T BE AS JEALOUS IF SHE FINDS A FEW OF THESE MIXED IN...
THWAP
DON'T ADD TO THE PILE, DUMBASS!
AWW.
I FIGURED GIRLS WOULD BE HAPPIER TO FIND OUT YOU JERK OFF TO GIRLS WHO LOOK LIKE THEM AS OPPOSED TO GIRLS WHO ARE THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE...
I DON'T THINK IT WORKS LIKE THAT.
WAIT, YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR OWN ROOM, RIGHT?
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CAUGHT WATCHING PORN?
NOPE.

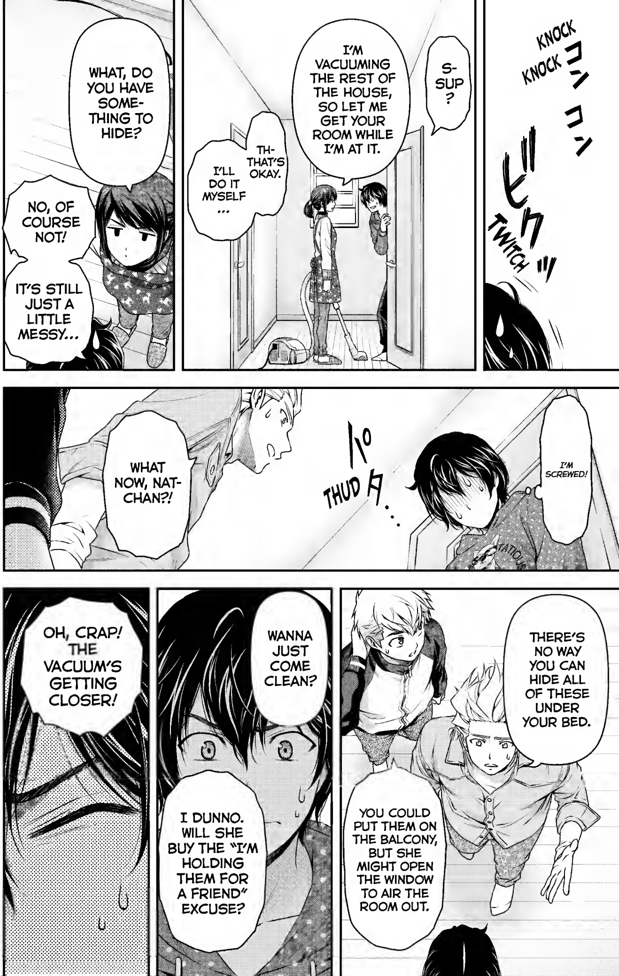

I HAVE HAD SOME CLOSE CALLS,
I WAS JUST ABOUT TO...
.HOP IN THE BATH!
TRACK
BUT I JUST PLAYED IT OFF LIKE I WAS ABOUT TO TAKE A BATH AND GOT AWAY UNDETECTED.
SOMETHING TELLS ME YOU WEREN'T FOOLING ANYONE.
NOPE. IT WAS THE PERFECT CRIME.
THEN, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?
I CAN'T TAKE THEM...
...
IF IT'S COME TO THIS,
THEN SACRIFICES MUST BE MADE.
ピンポーン
DING DONG
THANK YOU FOR COMING DURING MY TIME OF NEED,
MY DEAR COMRADES.

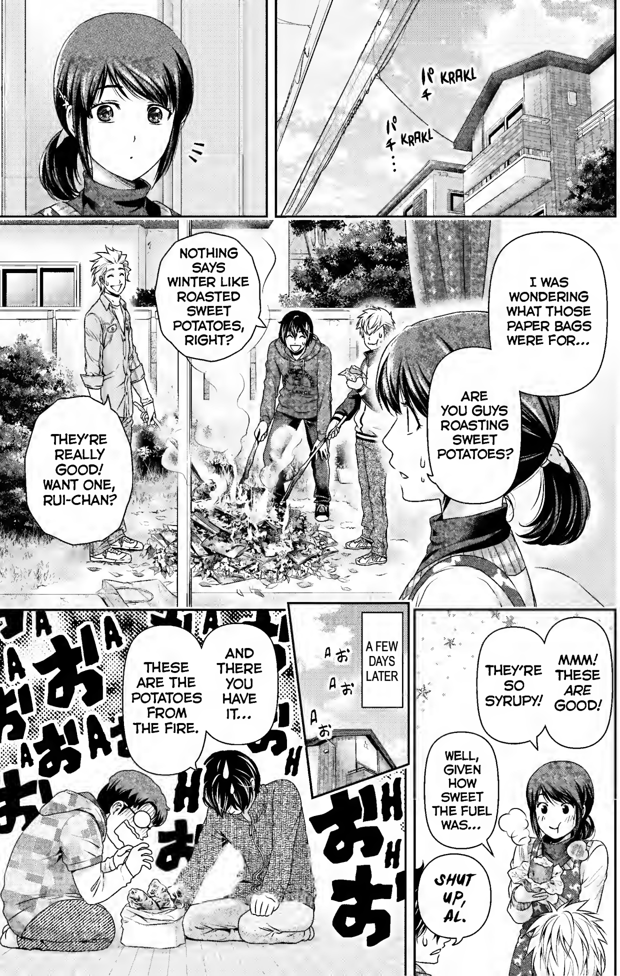

WHO ARE YOU CALLING COMRADE?
UM... TACHIBANA-SEMPAI LET US IN JUST NOW. DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE ALREADY LIVING TOGETHER...
OH, NAT-CHAN AND RUI-CHAN ARE STEP-SIBLINGS.
WHAAAAT?!
YOU CERTAINLY DROPPED THAT BOMBSHELL LIKE IT WAS NOTHING...
FORGET ABOUT THAT FOR NOW.
I'VE CALLED YOU HERE TODAY BECAUSE I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK.
A FAVOR?
I'D LIKE BOTH OF YOU...
...TO TAKE THESE HOME WITH YOU FOR THE TIME BEING.
ふぁさ…
RUSTLE
WH-
WHAT'S WITH THIS PILE OF PORN MAGS?!
YOU'RE FREE TO PERUSE THEM IN THE MEANWHILE, OF COURSE.
A COMRADE IN NEED IS A COMRADE INDEED!
YOU'LL TAKE THEM?!
I CAN'T TAKE THEM ALL, BUT I'LL DO WHAT I CAN.
グッ
GRAB

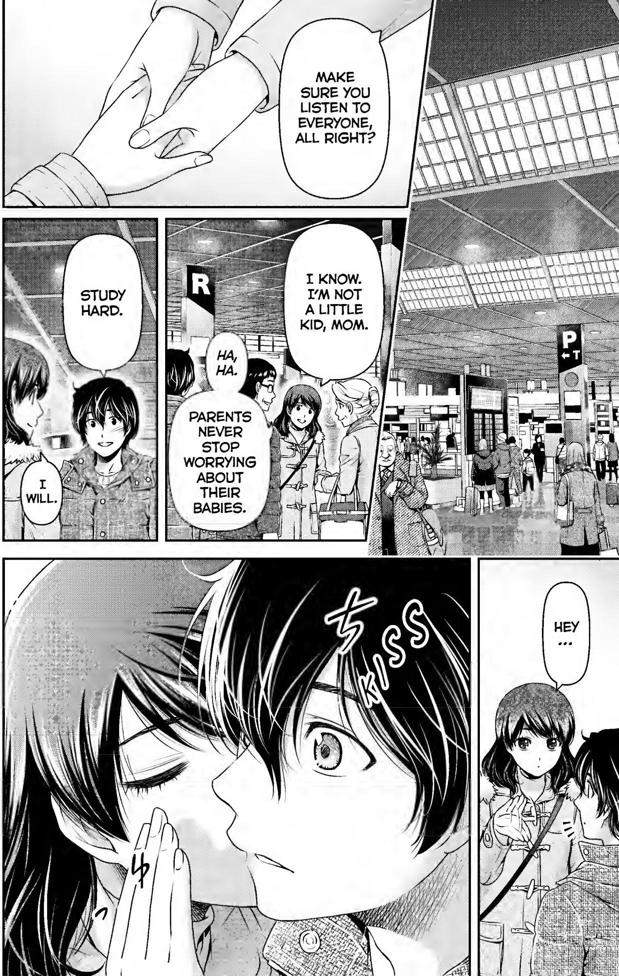

ARE YOU SURE, BARUSU? DON'T YOU HAVE AN OLDER SISTER?
YOU TOOK THEM PRETTY CONFIDENTLY ...
IF YOU'RE ASKING WHETHER OR NOT I HAVE ANYWHERE TO HIDE THEM, THEN THAT'S A FOOLISH QUESTION.
PORN STASHES ARE NOT FOUND,
BUT MADE!
UNDER THE TABLE!
IN A FALSE-BOTTOM DRAWER!
IN THE CASE OF AN ENCYCLOPEDIA!
IT'S ALL ABOUT USING YOUR HEAD.
WHOA! IT'S JUST LIKE D*TH NOTE!
BEING A CLOSET PERVERT IS A SKILL UNTO ITSELF...
RSTL
ALL RIGHT.
I'M OFF.
GOD-SPEED!

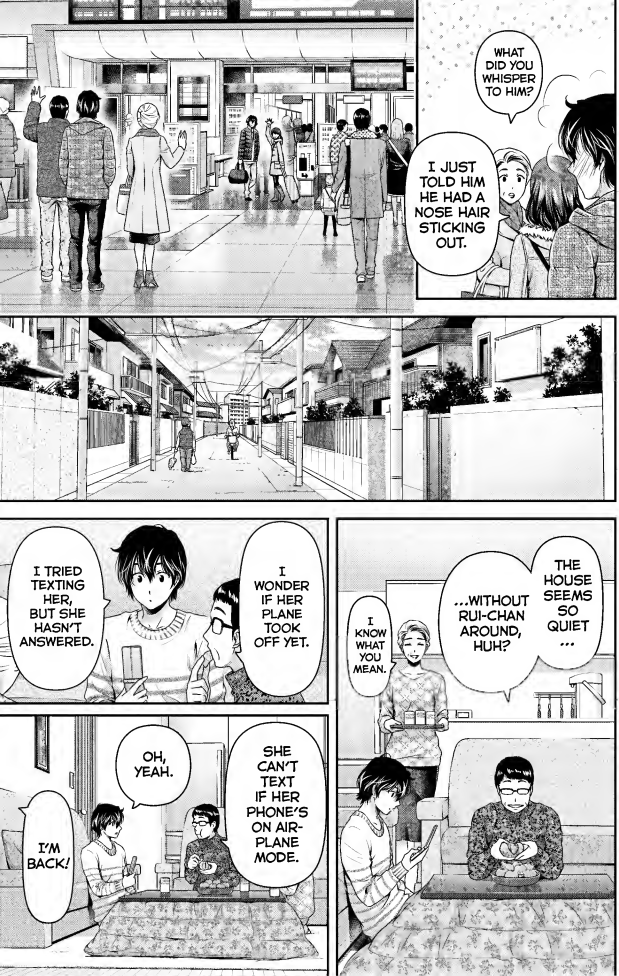

THAT BEING SAID ...
...THE PILE SURE DOESN'T LOOK ANY SMALLER.
ALL OF THE DVDS I BROUGHT ARE GONE.
I BET HE ONLY TOOK THINGS HE'S INTO.
DO YOU HAVE YOUR OWN ROOM, RIKKUN?
YEAH, BUT I SHARE IT WITH MY LITTLE BROTHER.
A LITTLE BROTHER'S NO BIG DEAL!
AS YOUR UPPERCLASSMAN, I ORDER YOU TO TAKE THE REST OF THESE!
HUUUUH?!
WELL,
LITTLE BROTHER
I GUESS REI WILL UNDERSTAND IF I EXPLAIN THE SITUATION.
I DON'T MIND COUGAR STUFF, EITHER ...
OH! RIKKUN?

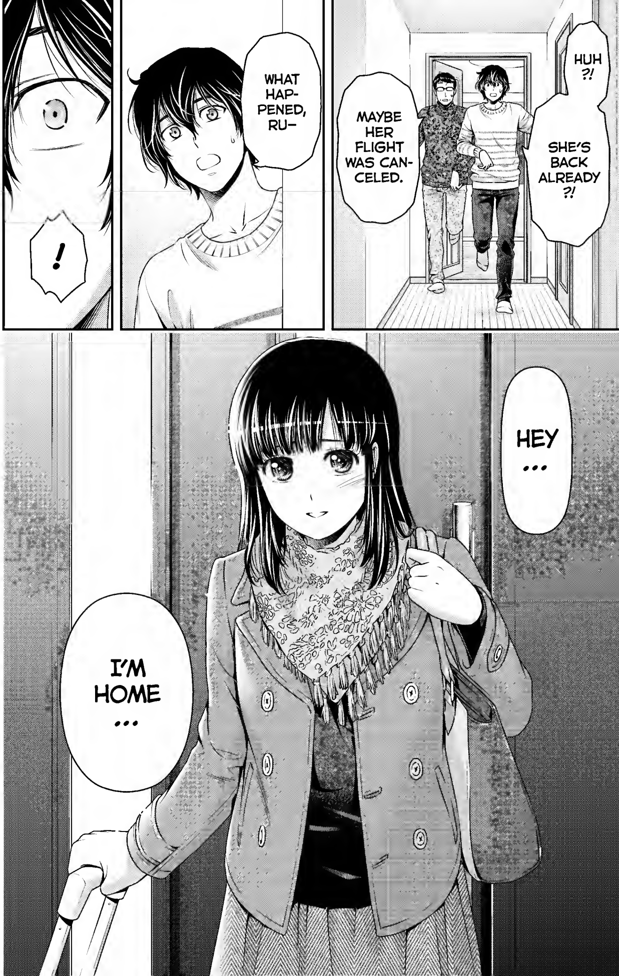

YOO-HOO! ARE YOU SHOPPING?
MO-
MOMOSEM–
THAT'S A LOT OF BAGS.
WHAT DID YOU BUY?
AH!
THIS IS, UM...
NO NEED TO BE EMBARRASSED!
SOMETHING'S FISHY...
...
REALLY!
DASH
IT'S NOTHING!
...AND HERE I AM.
WHY DID YOU COME BACK?!


KNOCK KNOCK
コン コン
ビクッ
TWITCH
S-SUP?
I'M VACUUMING THE REST OF THE HOUSE, SO LET ME GET YOUR ROOM WHILE I'M AT IT.
TH-THAT'S OKAY.
I'LL DO IT MYSELF...
WHAT, DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO HIDE?
NO, OF COURSE NOT!
IT'S STILL JUST A LITTLE MESSY...
I'M SCREWED!
パタ
THUD...
WHAT NOW, NAT-CHAN?!
THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN HIDE ALL OF THESE UNDER YOUR BED.
YOU COULD PUT THEM ON THE BALCONY, BUT SHE MIGHT OPEN THE WINDOW TO AIR THE ROOM OUT.
WANNA JUST COME CLEAN?
I DUNNO. WILL SHE BUY THE "I'M HOLDING THEM FOR A FRIEND" EXCUSE?
OH, CRAP! THE VACUUM'S GETTING CLOSER!

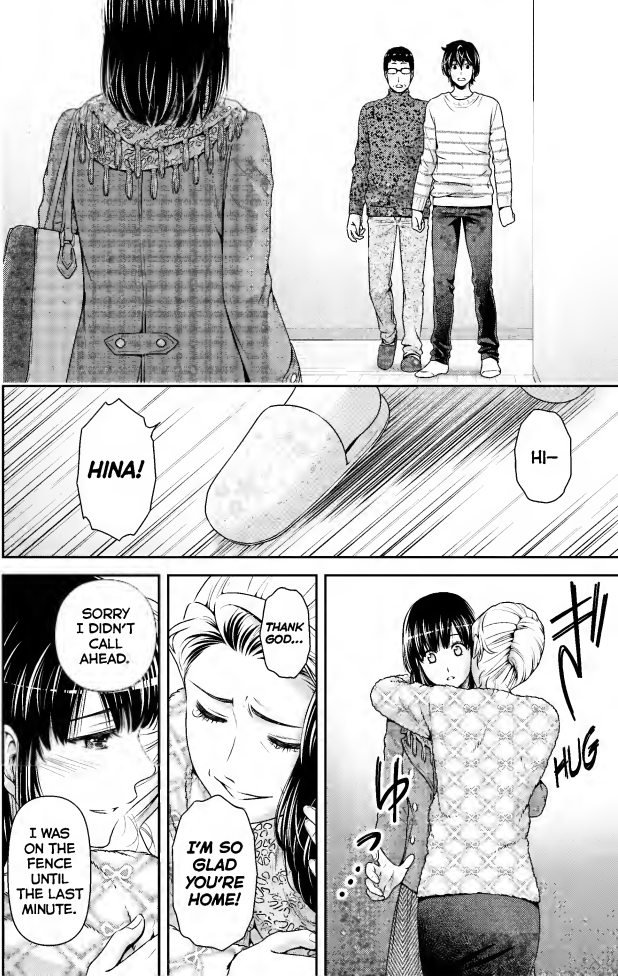

パチ KRAKL
パチ KRAKL
…
I WAS WONDERING WHAT THOSE PAPER BAGS WERE FOR...
ARE YOU GUYS ROASTING SWEET POTATOES?
NOTHING SAYS WINTER LIKE ROASTED SWEET POTATOES, RIGHT?
THEY'RE REALLY GOOD! WANT ONE, RUI-CHAN?
MMM! THESE *ARE* GOOD!
THEY'RE SO SYRUPY!
WELL, GIVEN HOW SWEET THE FUEL WAS...
SHUT UP, AL.
A FEW DAYS LATER
A お
A お
A お
AND THERE YOU HAVE IT...
THESE ARE THE POTATOES FROM THE FIRE.
AAAHHH おおお

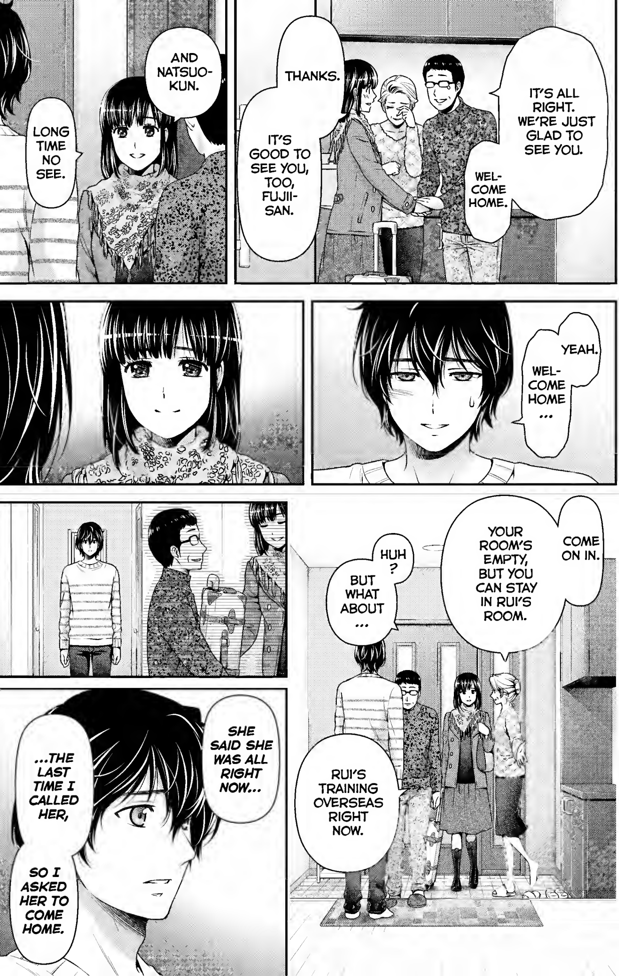

P
←T
MAKE SURE YOU LISTEN TO EVERYONE, ALL RIGHT?
R
I KNOW. I'M NOT A LITTLE KID, MOM.
HA, HA.
PARENTS NEVER STOP WORRYING ABOUT THEIR BABIES.
STUDY HARD.
I WILL.
HEY ...
ち
KISS
ゅ

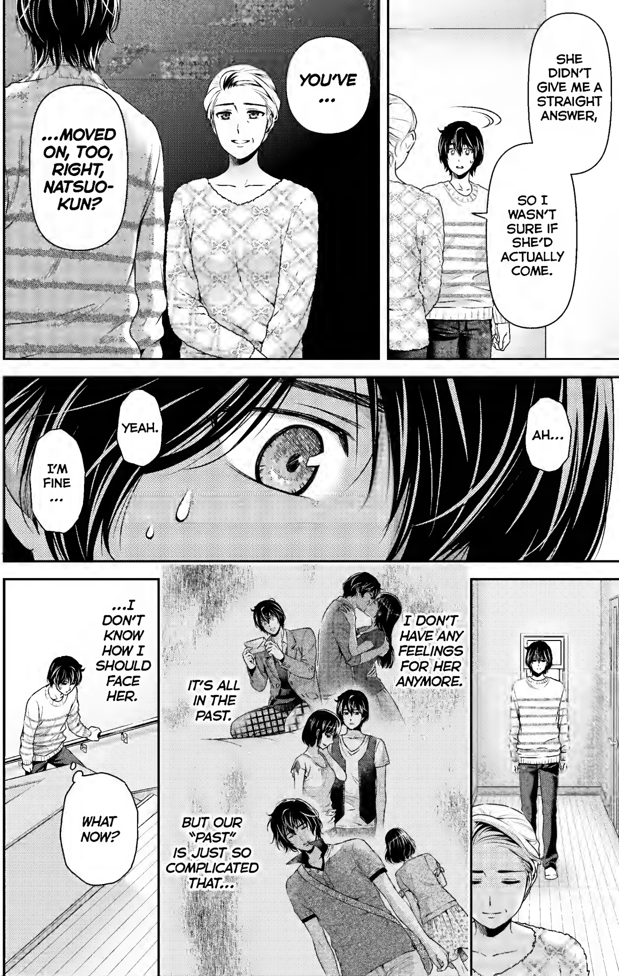

WHAT DID YOU WHISPER TO HIM?
I JUST TOLD HIM HE HAD A NOSE HAIR STICKING OUT.
THE HOUSE SEEMS SO QUIET...
...WITHOUT RUI-CHAN AROUND, HUH?
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.
I WONDER IF HER PLANE TOOK OFF YET.
I TRIED TEXTING HER, BUT SHE HASN'T ANSWERED.
SHE CAN'T TEXT IF HER PHONE'S ON AIRPLANE MODE.
OH, YEAH.
I'M BACK!

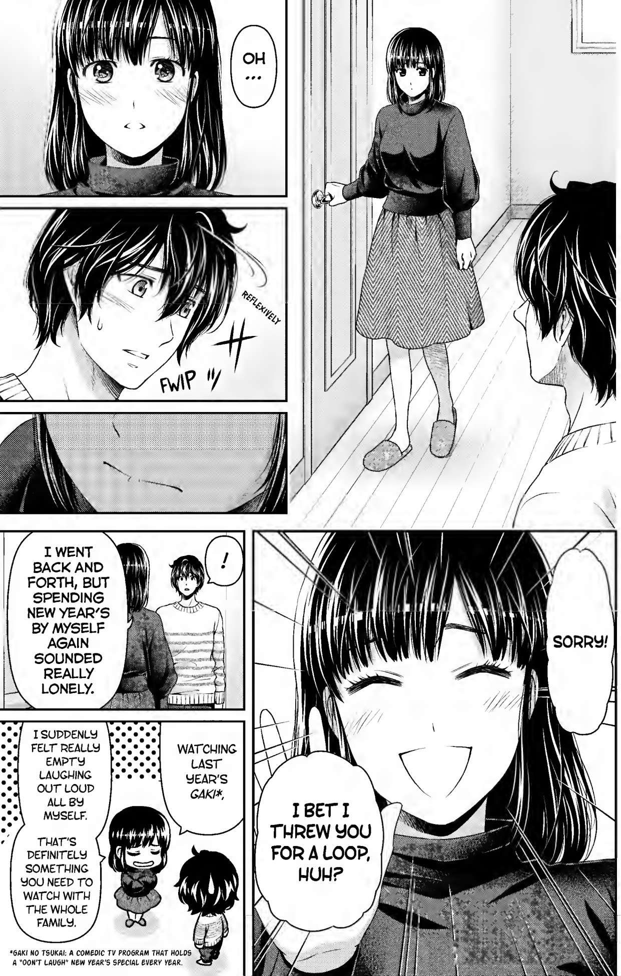

HUH ?!
SHE'S BACK ALREADY ?!
MAYBE HER FLIGHT WAS CANCELED.
WHAT HAPPENED, RU–
!
HEY ...
I'M HOME ...

CHAPTER 129: NEW YEAR'S REUNION

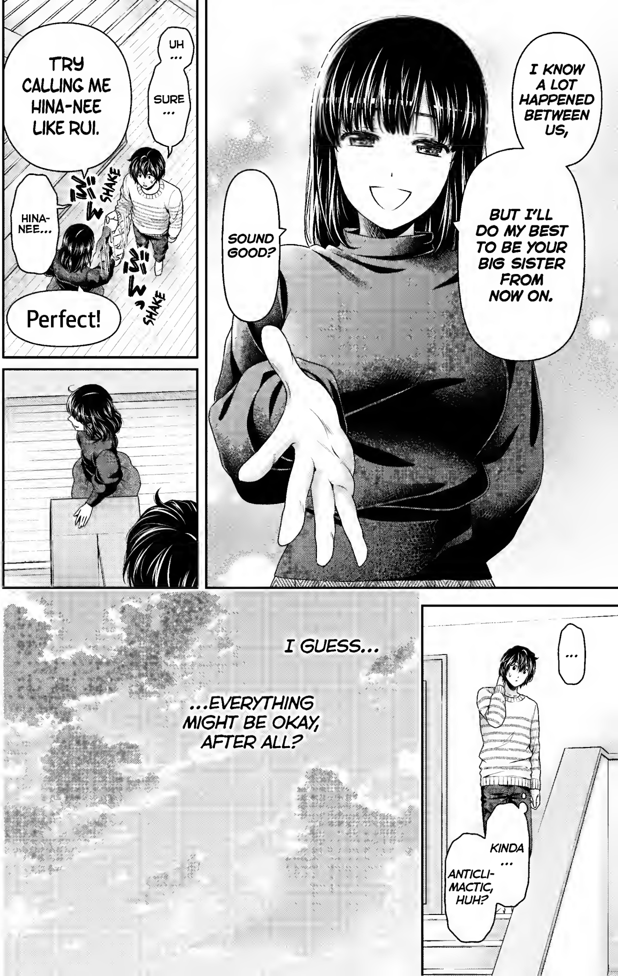

HI—
HINA!
ぎゅっ
HUG
...
THANK GOD...
I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE HOME!
SORRY I DIDN'T CALL AHEAD.
I WAS ON THE FENCE UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE.

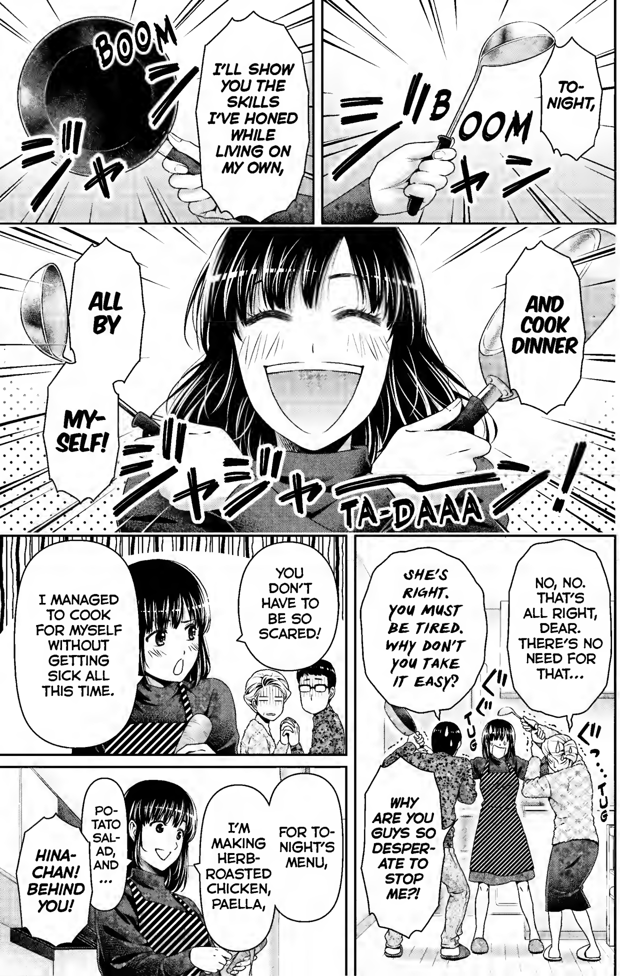

IT'S ALL RIGHT. WE'RE JUST GLAD TO SEE YOU.
WELCOME HOME.
THANKS.
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, TOO, FUJII-SAN.
AND NATSUO-KUN.
LONG TIME NO SEE.
YEAH.
WELCOME HOME...
COME ON IN.
YOUR ROOM'S EMPTY, BUT YOU CAN STAY IN RUI'S ROOM.
HUH?
BUT WHAT ABOUT...
RUI'S TRAINING OVERSEAS RIGHT NOW.
SHE SAID SHE WAS ALL RIGHT NOW...
...THE LAST TIME I CALLED HER,
SO I ASKED HER TO COME HOME.

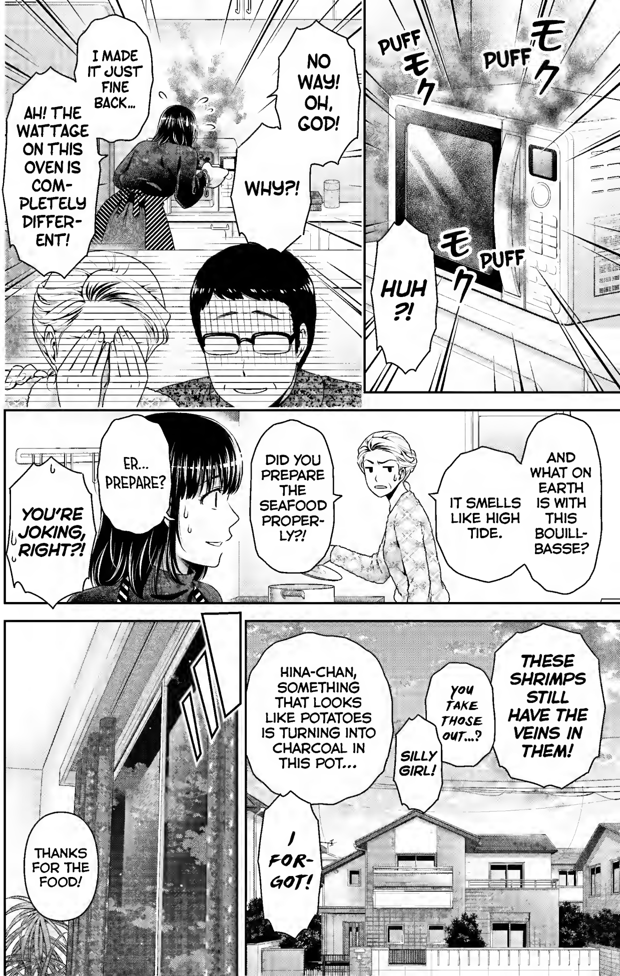

SHE DIDN'T GIVE ME A STRAIGHT ANSWER,
SO I WASN'T SURE IF SHE'D ACTUALLY COME.
YOU'VE ...
...MOVED ON, TOO, RIGHT, NATSUO-KUN?
AH...
YEAH.
I'M FINE ...
I DON'T HAVE ANY FEELINGS FOR HER ANYMORE.
IT'S ALL IN THE PAST.
BUT OUR "PAST" IS JUST SO COMPLICATED THAT...
...I DON'T KNOW HOW I SHOULD FACE HER.
WHAT NOW?

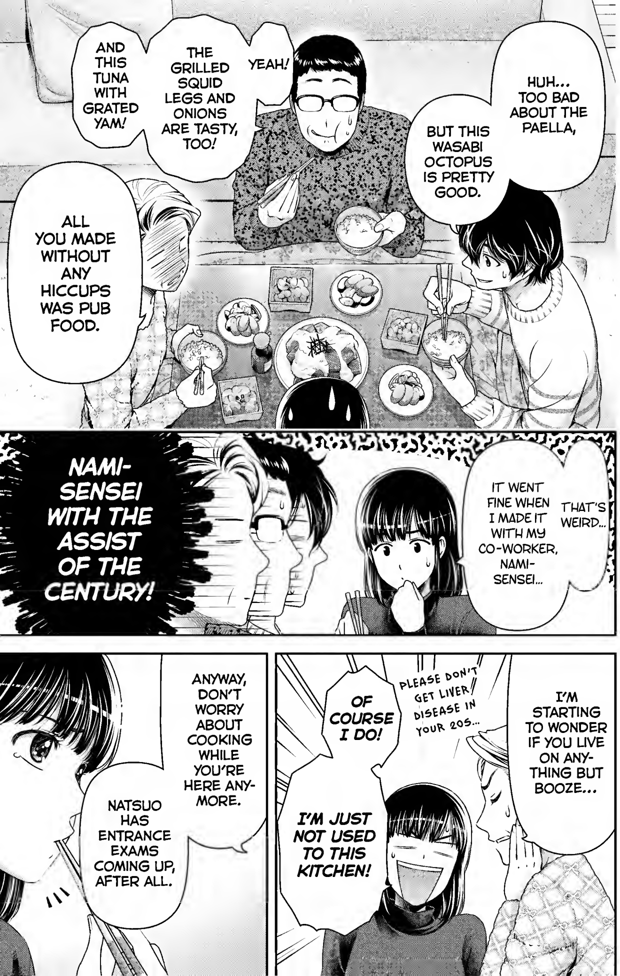

OH ...
REFLEXIVELY
FWIP
SORRY!
I BET I THREW YOU FOR A LOOP, HUH?
!
I WENT BACK AND FORTH, BUT SPENDING NEW YEAR'S BY MYSELF AGAIN SOUNDED REALLY LONELY.
WATCHING LAST YEAR'S *GAKI**,
I SUDDENLY FELT REALLY EMPTY LAUGHING OUT LOUD ALL BY MYSELF.
THAT'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING YOU NEED TO WATCH WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY.

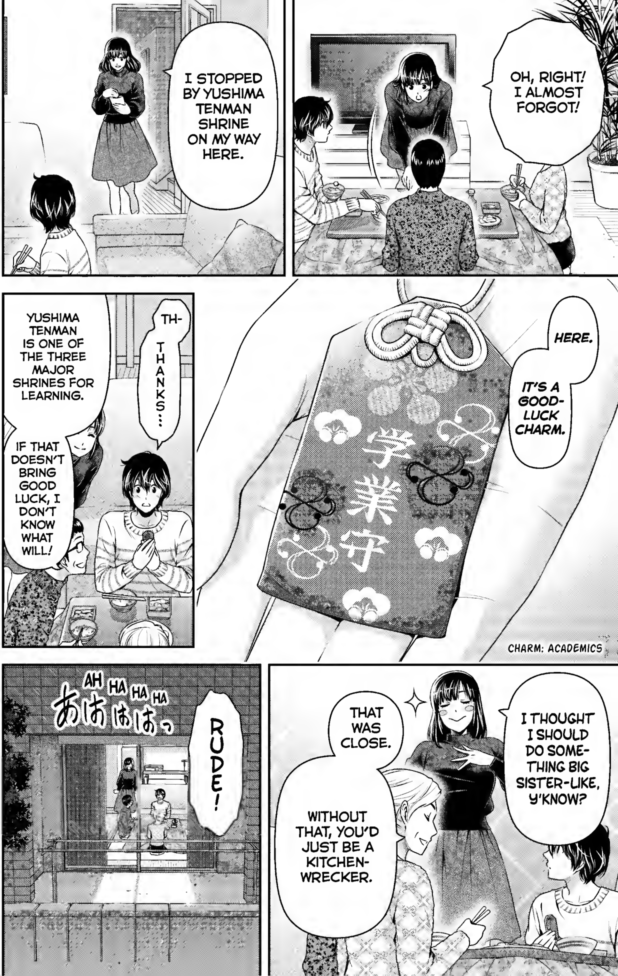
*GAKI NO TSUKAI: A COMEDIC TV PROGRAM THAT HOLDS A "DON'T LAUGH" NEW YEAR'S SPECIAL EVERY YEAR.

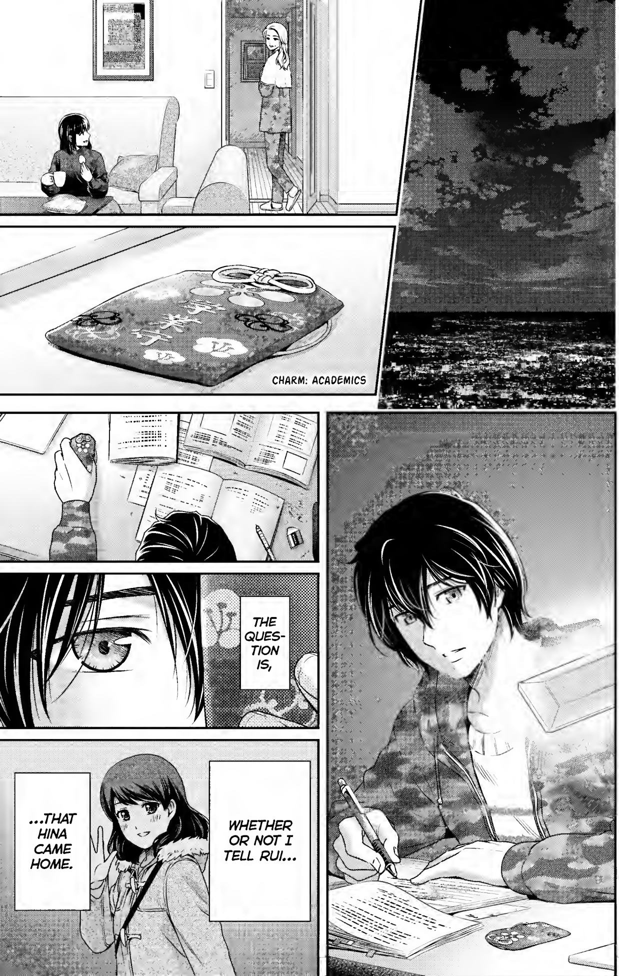

I KNOW A LOT HAPPENED BETWEEN US,
BUT I'LL DO MY BEST TO BE YOUR BIG SISTER FROM NOW ON.
SOUND GOOD?
TRY CALLING ME HINA-NEE LIKE RUI.
UH... SURE...
HINA-NEE...
SHAKE
SHAKE
Perfect!
...
KINDA... ANTICLI-MACTIC, HUH?
I GUESS...
...EVERYTHING MIGHT BE OKAY, AFTER ALL?

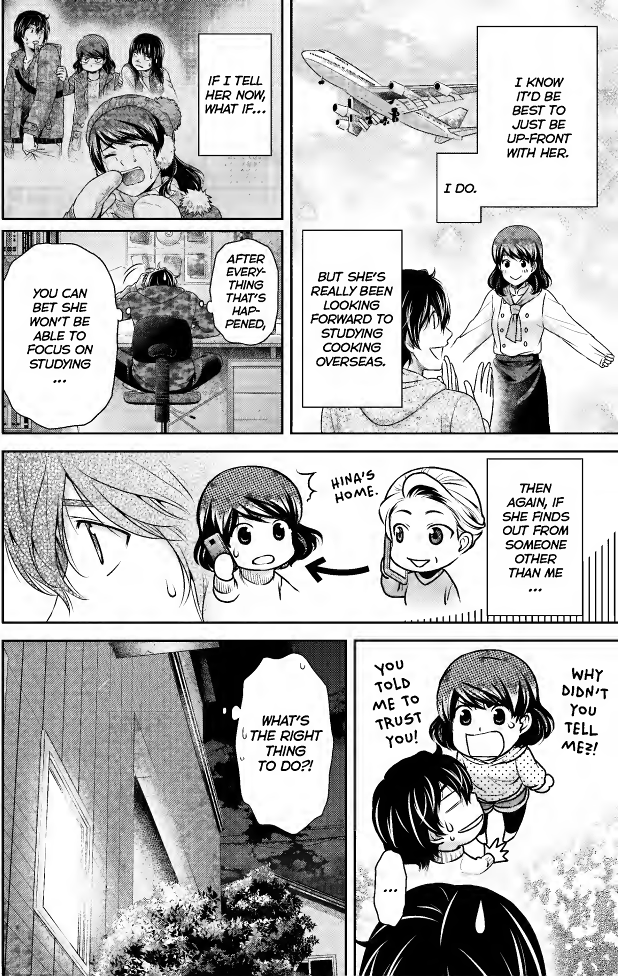

TO-NIGHT,
BOOM
I'LL SHOW YOU THE SKILLS I'VE HONED WHILE LIVING ON MY OWN,
BOOM
AND COOK DINNER
ALL BY MYSELF!
TA-DAAA
NO, NO. THAT'S ALL RIGHT, DEAR. THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT...
SHE'S RIGHT. YOU MUST BE TIRED. WHY DON'T YOU TAKE IT EASY?
TUG
TUG
WHY ARE YOU GUYS SO DESPERATE TO STOP ME?!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO SCARED!
I MANAGED TO COOK FOR MYSELF WITHOUT GETTING SICK ALL THIS TIME.
FOR TONIGHT'S MENU,
I'M MAKING HERB-ROASTED CHICKEN, PAELLA,
POTATO SALAD, AND...
HINA-CHAN! BEHIND YOU!

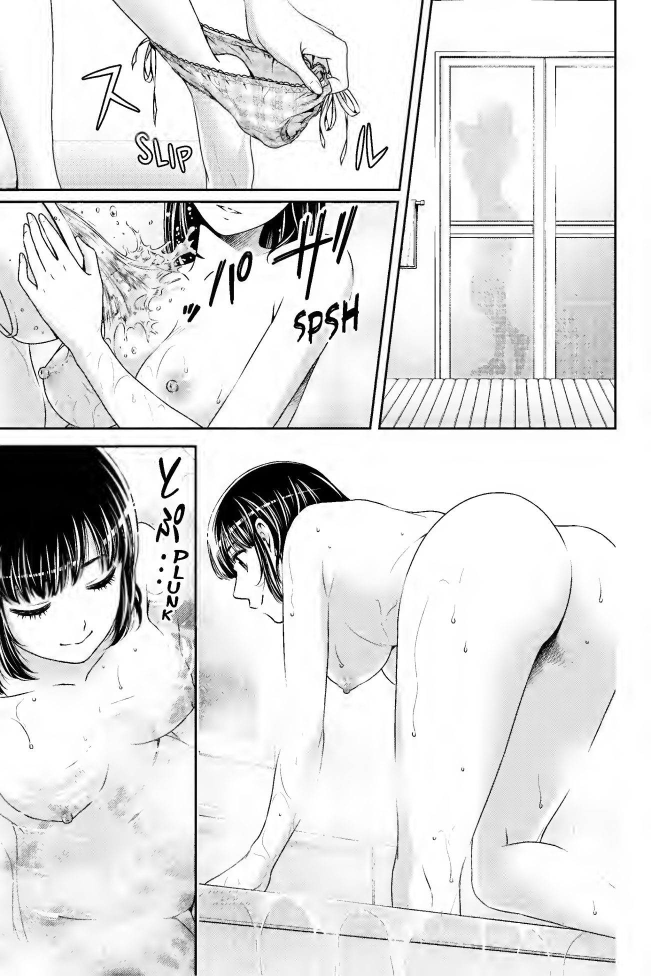

PUFF
モク
PUFF
モク
PUFF
モク
HUH?!
NO WAY! OH, GOD!
WHY?!
I MADE IT JUST FINE BACK...
AH! THE WATTAGE ON THIS OVEN IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!
AND WHAT ON EARTH IS WITH THIS BOUILLBASSE?
IT SMELLS LIKE HIGH TIDE.
DID YOU PREPARE THE SEAFOOD PROPERLY?!
ER... PREPARE?
YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT?!
THESE SHRIMPS STILL HAVE THE VEINS IN THEM!
YOU TAKE THOSE OUT...?
SILLY GIRL!
HINA-CHAN, SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE POTATOES IS TURNING INTO CHARCOAL IN THIS POT...
I FORGOT!
THANKS FOR THE FOOD!

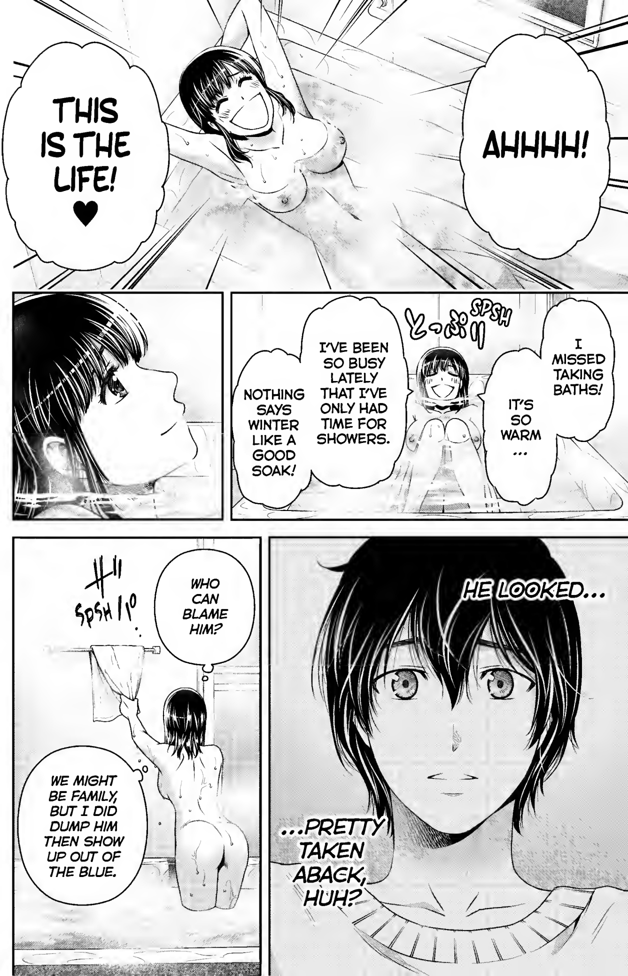

HUH... TOO BAD ABOUT THE PAELLA,
BUT THIS WASABI OCTOPUS IS PRETTY GOOD.
YEAH!
THE GRILLED SQUID LEGS AND ONIONS ARE TASTY, TOO!
AND THIS TUNA WITH GRATED YAM!
ALL YOU MADE WITHOUT ANY HICCUPS WAS PUB FOOD.
THAT'S WEIRD...
IT WENT FINE WHEN I MADE IT WITH MY CO-WORKER, NAMI-SENSEI...
NAMI-SENSEI WITH THE ASSIST OF THE CENTURY!
I'M STARTING TO WONDER IF YOU LIVE ON ANYTHING BUT BOOZE...
PLEASE DON'T GET LIVER DISEASE IN YOUR 20S...
OF COURSE I DO!
I'M JUST NOT USED TO THIS KITCHEN!
ANYWAY, DON'T WORRY ABOUT COOKING WHILE YOU'RE HERE ANYMORE.
NATSUO HAS ENTRANCE EXAMS COMING UP, AFTER ALL.

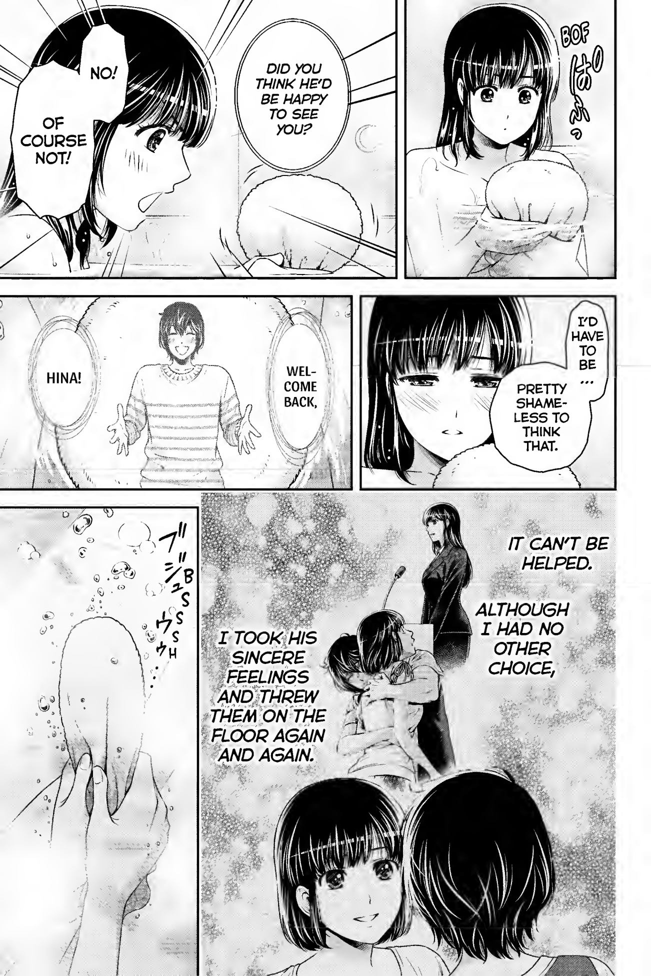

OH, RIGHT! I ALMOST FORGOT!
I STOPPED BY YUSHIMA TENMAN SHRINE ON MY WAY HERE.
HERE.
IT'S A GOOD-LUCK CHARM.
学業守
CHARM: ACADEMICS
TH-
THANKS...
YUSHIMA TENMAN IS ONE OF THE THREE MAJOR SHRINES FOR LEARNING.
IF THAT DOESN'T BRING GOOD LUCK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL!
I THOUGHT I SHOULD DO SOMETHING BIG SISTER-LIKE, Y'KNOW?
THAT WAS CLOSE.
WITHOUT THAT, YOU'D JUST BE A KITCHEN-WRECKER.
AH HA HA HA
あははは
RUDE!

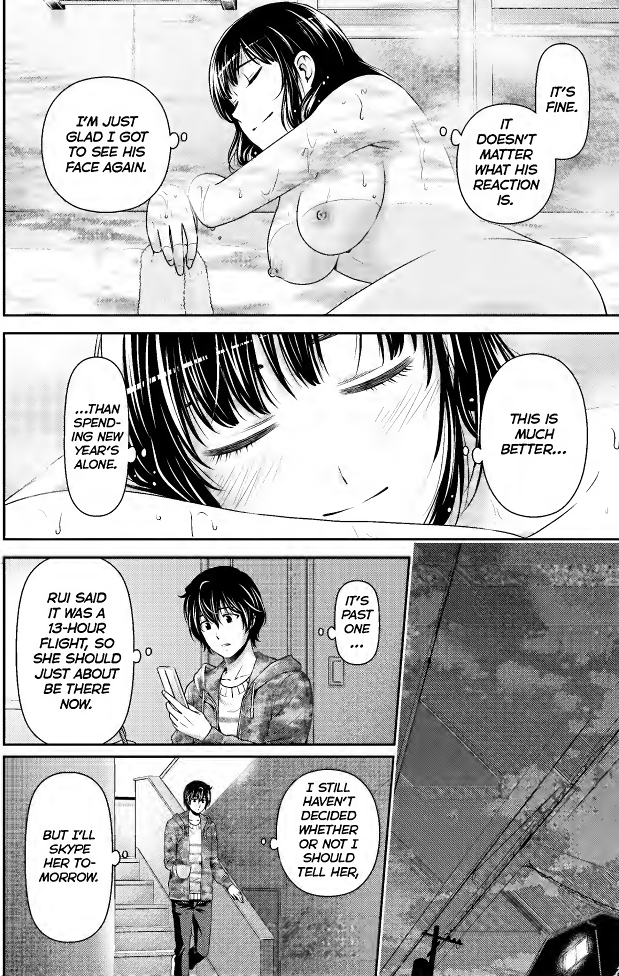

CHARM: ACADEMICS
THE QUESTION IS,
WHETHER OR NOT I TELL RUI...
...THAT HINA CAME HOME.

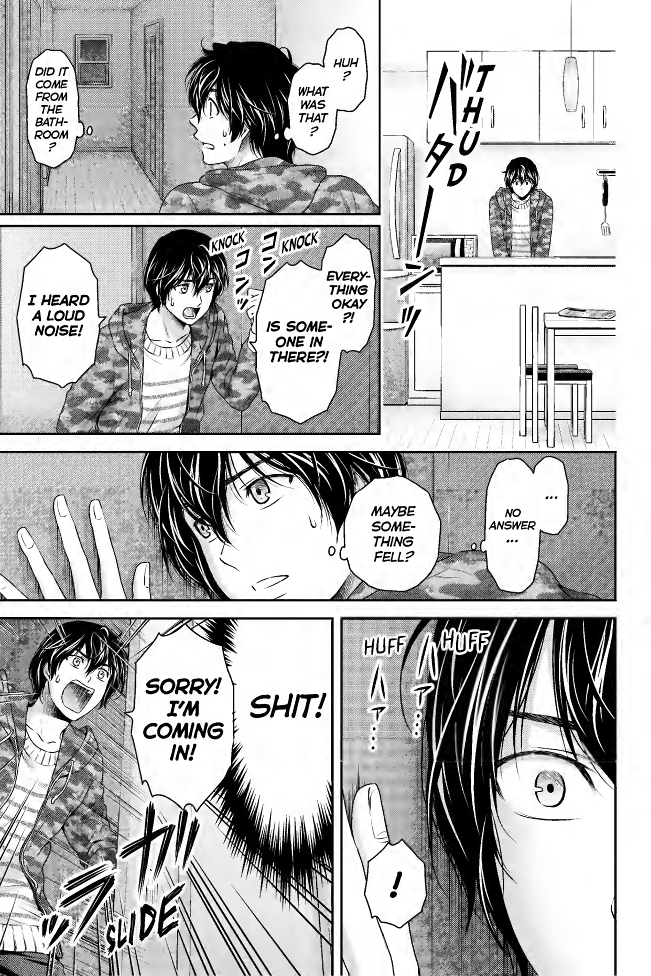

I KNOW IT'D BE BEST TO JUST BE UP-FRONT WITH HER.
I DO.
BUT SHE'S REALLY BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO STUDYING COOKING OVERSEAS.
IF I TELL HER NOW, WHAT IF...
AFTER EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED,
YOU CAN BET SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO FOCUS ON STUDYING...
THEN AGAIN, IF SHE FINDS OUT FROM SOMEONE OTHER THAN ME...
HINA'S HOME.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?!
YOU TOLD ME TO TRUST YOU!
...
WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?!

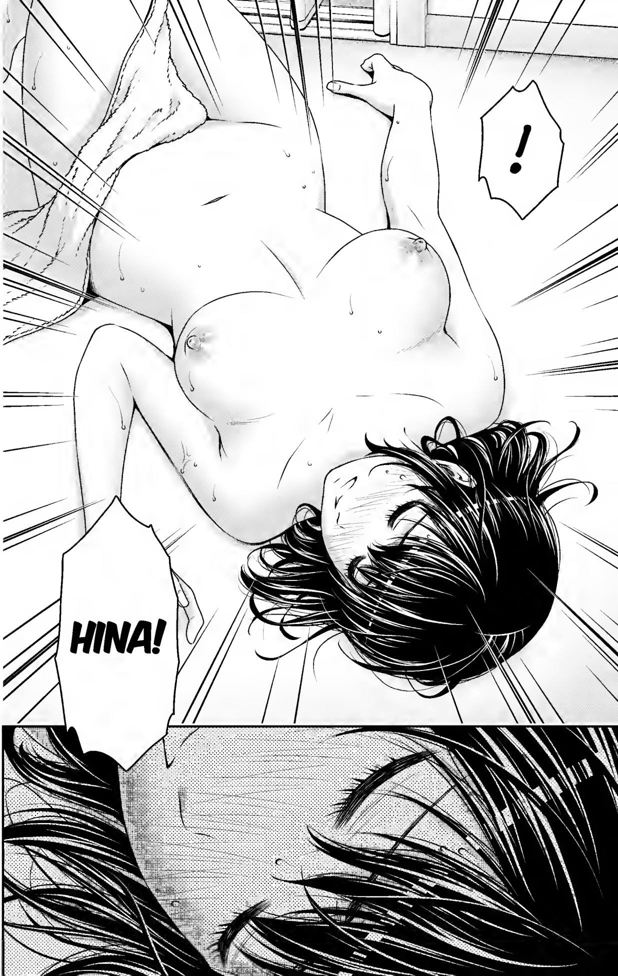

スル
SLIP
ザパッ
SPSH
PLUNK


AHHHH!
THIS IS THE LIFE! ♥
とっぷり SPSH
I MISSED TAKING BATHS!
IT'S SO WARM...
I'VE BEEN SO BUSY LATELY THAT I'VE ONLY HAD TIME FOR SHOWERS.
NOTHING SAYS WINTER LIKE A GOOD SOAK!
HE LOOKED...
...PRETTY TAKEN ABACK, HUH?
WHO CAN BLAME HIM?
SPSH
WE MIGHT BE FAMILY, BUT I DID DUMP HIM THEN SHOW UP OUT OF THE BLUE.

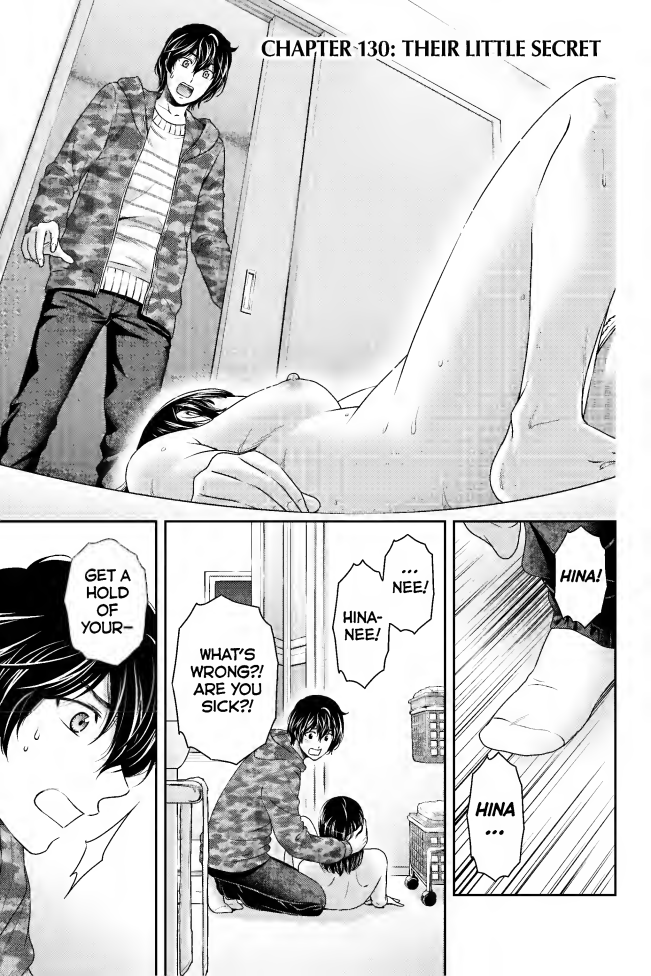

BOF
はふっ
DID YOU THINK HE'D BE HAPPY TO SEE YOU?
NO!
OF COURSE NOT!
I'D HAVE TO BE…
PRETTY SHAMELESS TO THINK THAT.
WELCOME BACK,
HINA!
IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
ALTHOUGH I HAD NO OTHER CHOICE,
I TOOK HIS SINCERE FEELINGS AND THREW THEM ON THE FLOOR AGAIN AND AGAIN.
ブジュウゥ…
BSSSH

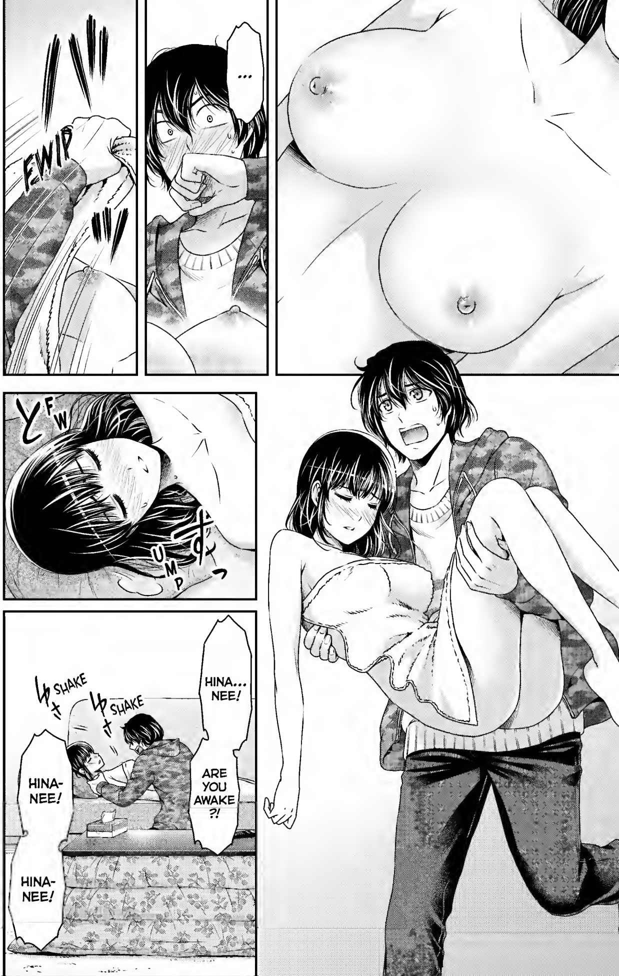

IT'S FINE.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HIS REACTION IS.
I'M JUST GLAD I GOT TO SEE HIS FACE AGAIN.
THIS IS MUCH BETTER...
...THAN SPENDING NEW YEAR'S ALONE.
IT'S PAST ONE ...
RUI SAID IT WAS A 13-HOUR FLIGHT, SO SHE SHOULD JUST ABOUT BE THERE NOW.
I STILL HAVEN'T DECIDED WHETHER OR NOT I SHOULD TELL HER,
BUT I'LL SKYPE HER TOMORROW.

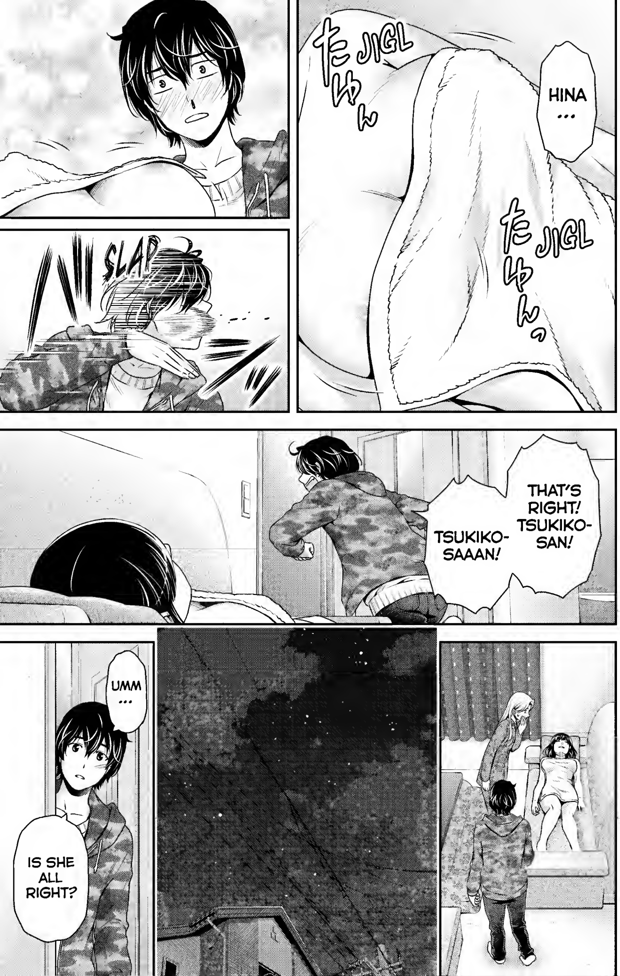

THUD
バターンッ
HUH? WHAT WAS THAT?
DID IT COME FROM THE BATHROOM?
KNOCK KNOCK
コンコンッ
EVERYTHING OKAY?!
IS SOMEONE IN THERE?!
I HEARD A LOUD NOISE!
... NO ANSWER ...
MAYBE SOMETHING FELL?
HUFF HUFF
ハァ… ハァ…
!
SHIT!
SORRY! I'M COMING IN!
SLIDE
ガラッ

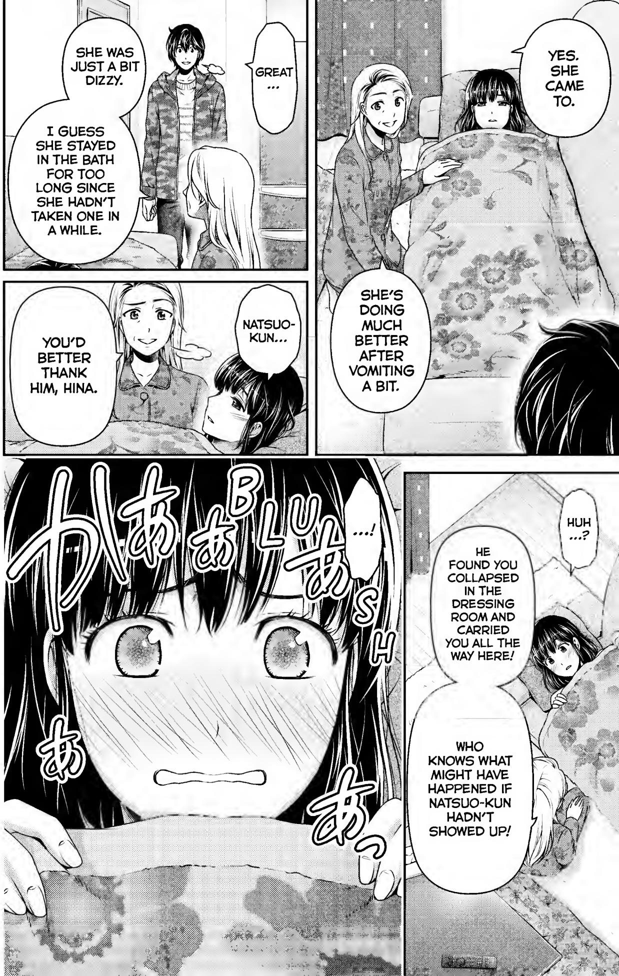

!
HINA!

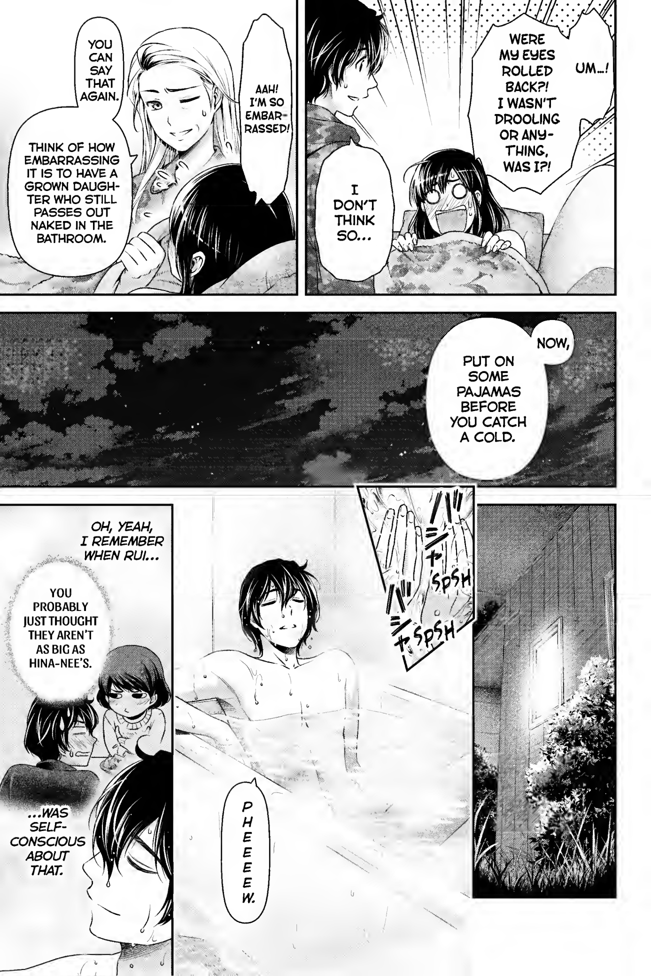
CHAPTER 130: THEIR LITTLE SECRET

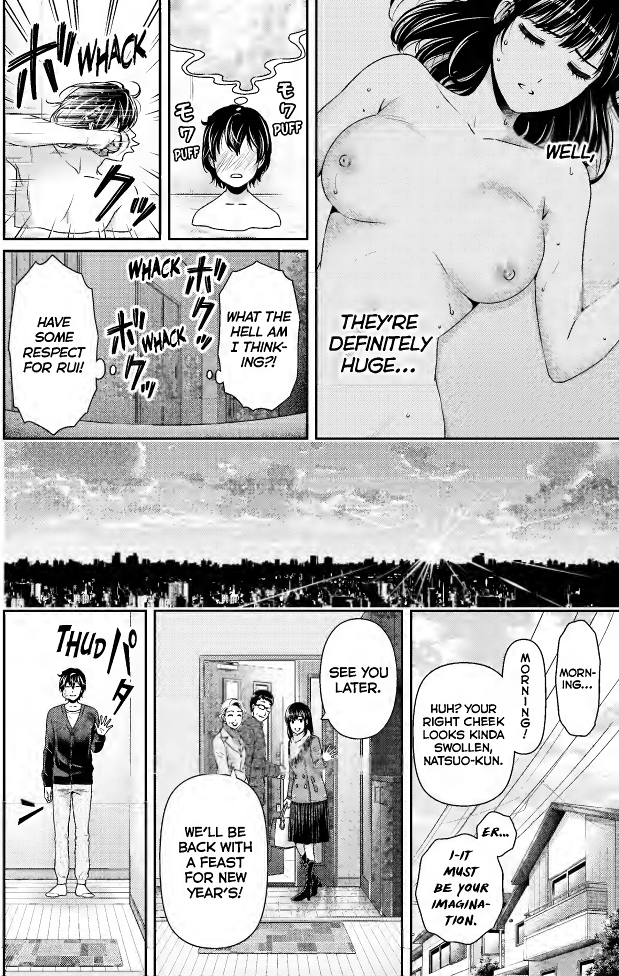

HINA!
HINA...
...NEE!
HINA-NEE!
WHAT'S WRONG?! ARE YOU SICK?!
GET A HOLD OF YOUR–

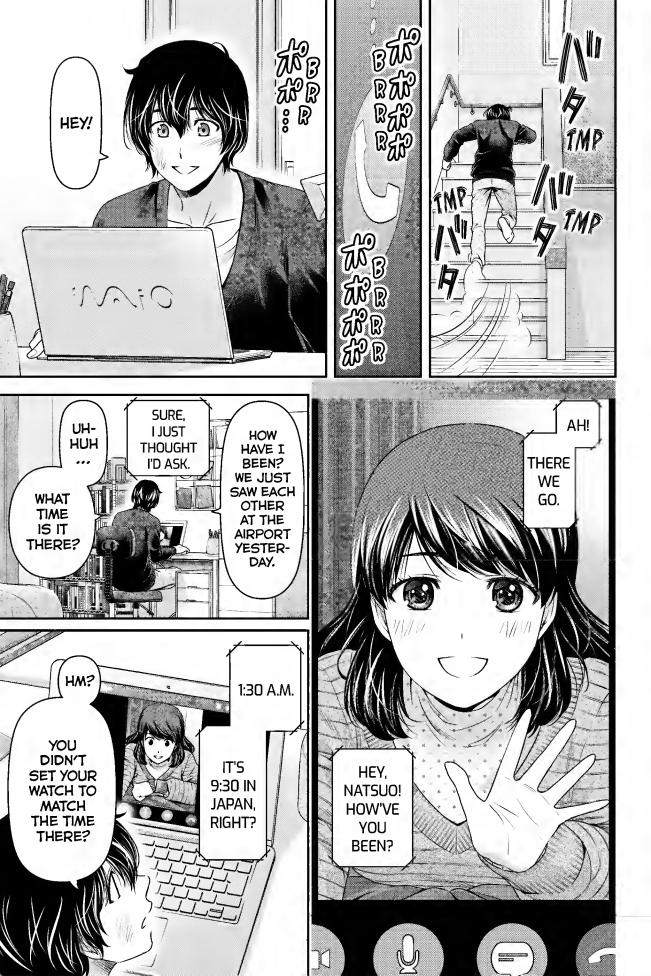

...
FWIP
と FW
ず UMP っ
HINA... NEE!
ARE YOU AWAKE?!
ゆ SHAKE さ
ゆ SHAKE さ
HINA-NEE!
HINA-NEE!

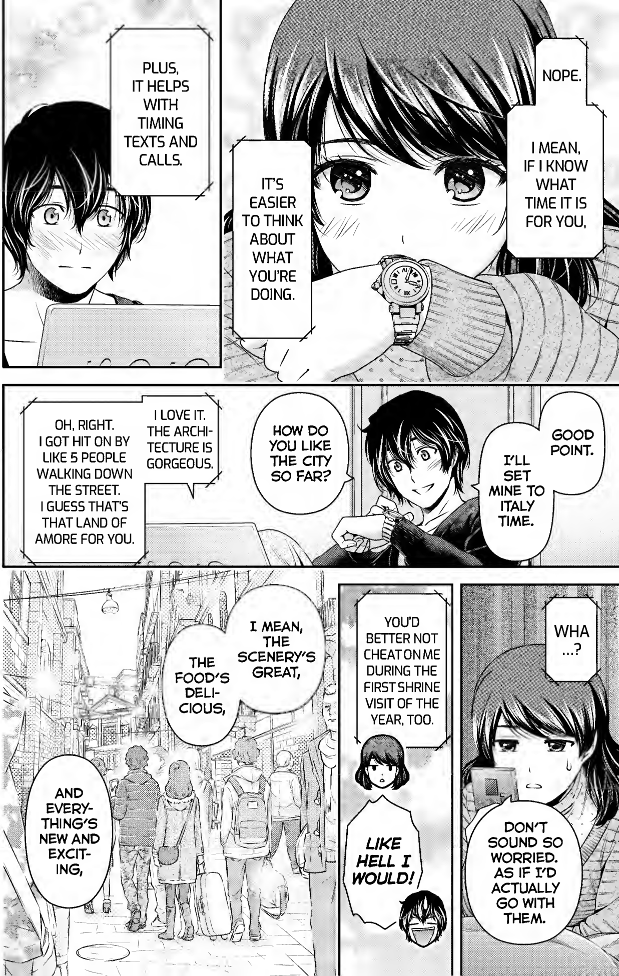

たゆん JIGL
HINA…
たゆんっ JIGL
SLAP
THAT'S RIGHT! TSUKIKO-SAN!
TSUKIKO-SAAAN!
UMM…
IS SHE ALL RIGHT?

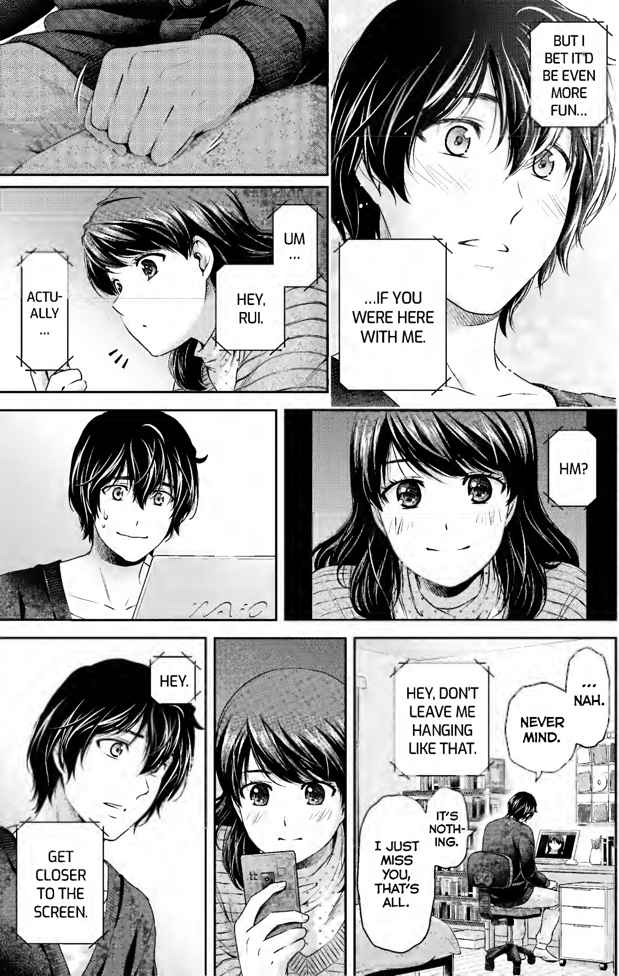

YES. SHE CAME TO.
SHE'S DOING MUCH BETTER AFTER VOMITING A BIT.
GREAT...
SHE WAS JUST A BIT DIZZY.
I GUESS SHE STAYED IN THE BATH FOR TOO LONG SINCE SHE HADN'T TAKEN ONE IN A WHILE.
NATSUO-KUN...
YOU'D BETTER THANK HIM, HINA.
HUH...?
HE FOUND YOU COLLAPSED IN THE DRESSING ROOM AND CARRIED YOU ALL THE WAY HERE!
WHO KNOWS WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED IF NATSUO-KUN HADN'T SHOWED UP!
...!
BLUSH
わーあぁあああっ

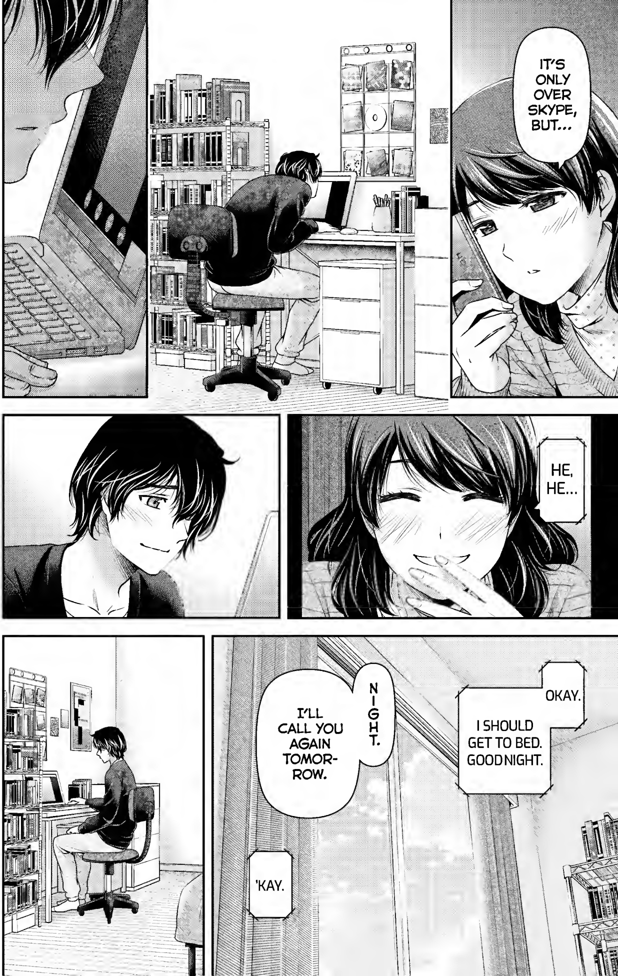

UM...!
WERE MY EYES ROLLED BACK?! I WASN'T DROOLING OR ANYTHING, WAS I?!
I DON'T THINK SO...
AAH! I'M SO EMBARRASSED!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN.
THINK OF HOW EMBARRASSING IT IS TO HAVE A GROWN DAUGHTER WHO STILL PASSES OUT NAKED IN THE BATHROOM.
NOW, PUT ON SOME PAJAMAS BEFORE YOU CATCH A COLD.
SPSH
SPSH
PHEEEEEW.
OH, YEAH, I REMEMBER WHEN RUI...
YOU PROBABLY JUST THOUGHT THEY AREN'T AS BIG AS HINA-NEE'S.
...WAS SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT THAT.

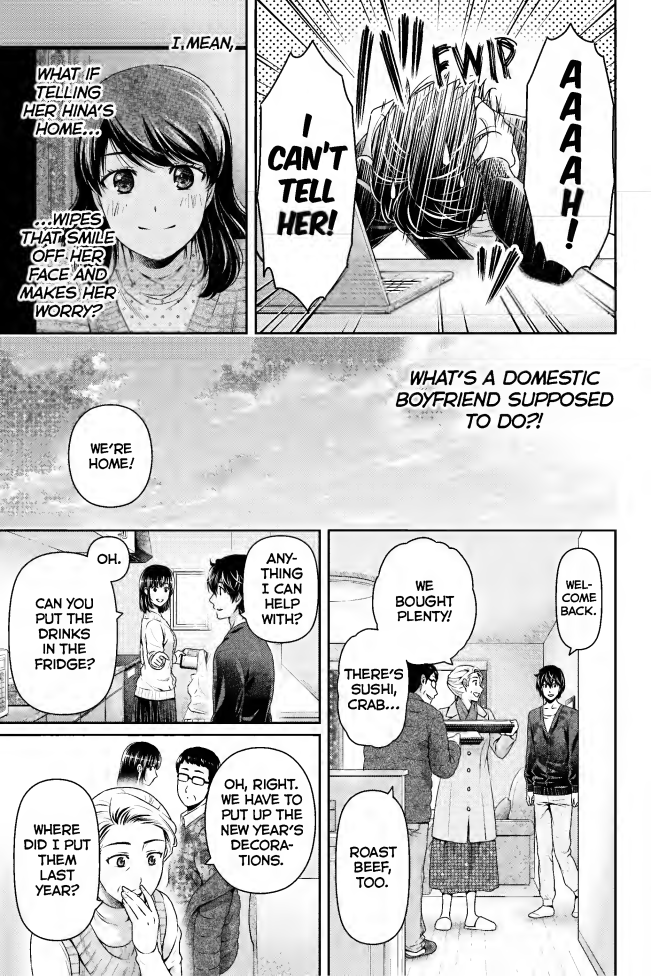

WELL,
THEY'RE DEFINITELY HUGE...
モワ PUFF
モワ PUFF
ボ WHACK
クッ
WHAT THE HELL AM I THINKING?!
WHACK ボクッ
ボクッ WHACK
HAVE SOME RESPECT FOR RUI!
MORNING...
MORNING!
HUH? YOUR RIGHT CHEEK LOOKS KINDA SWOLLEN, NATSUO-KUN.
ER...
I-IT MUST BE YOUR IMAGINATION.
SEE YOU LATER.
WE'LL BE BACK WITH A FEAST FOR NEW YEAR'S!
THUD パタ
ン

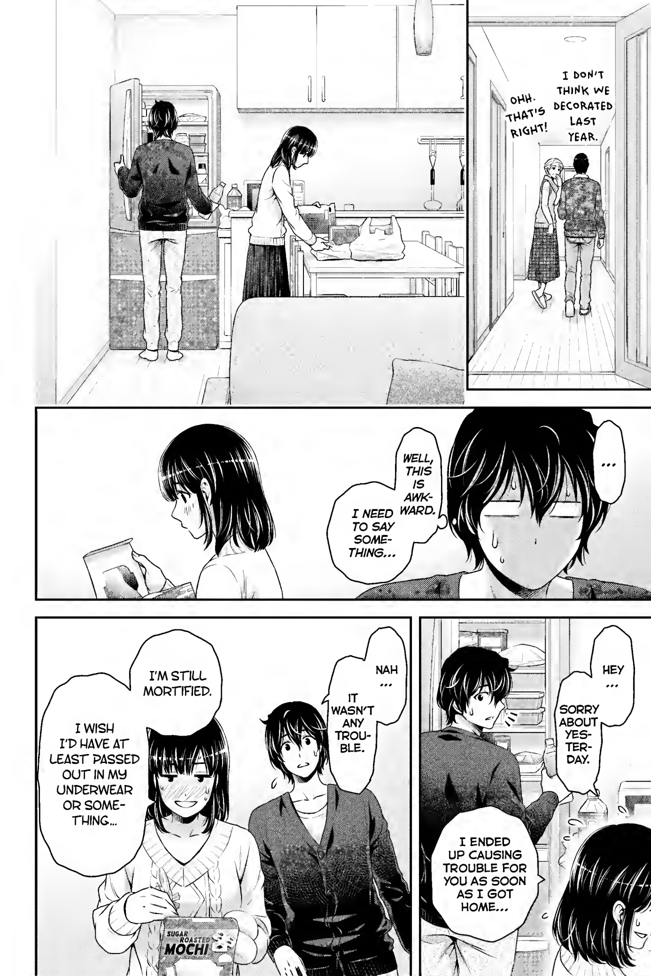

バタ
TMP
バタ
TMP
バタ
TMP
ポポポポ
BRRR
ポポポポ
BRRR
ポポ…
BRR
HEY!
VAIO
AH!
THERE WE GO.
HEY, NATSUO! HOW'VE YOU BEEN?
HOW HAVE I BEEN? WE JUST SAW EACH OTHER AT THE AIRPORT YESTERDAY.
SURE, I JUST THOUGHT I'D ASK.
UH-HUH…
WHAT TIME IS IT THERE?
1:30 A.M.
HM?
IT'S 9:30 IN JAPAN, RIGHT?
YOU DIDN'T SET YOUR WATCH TO MATCH THE TIME THERE?

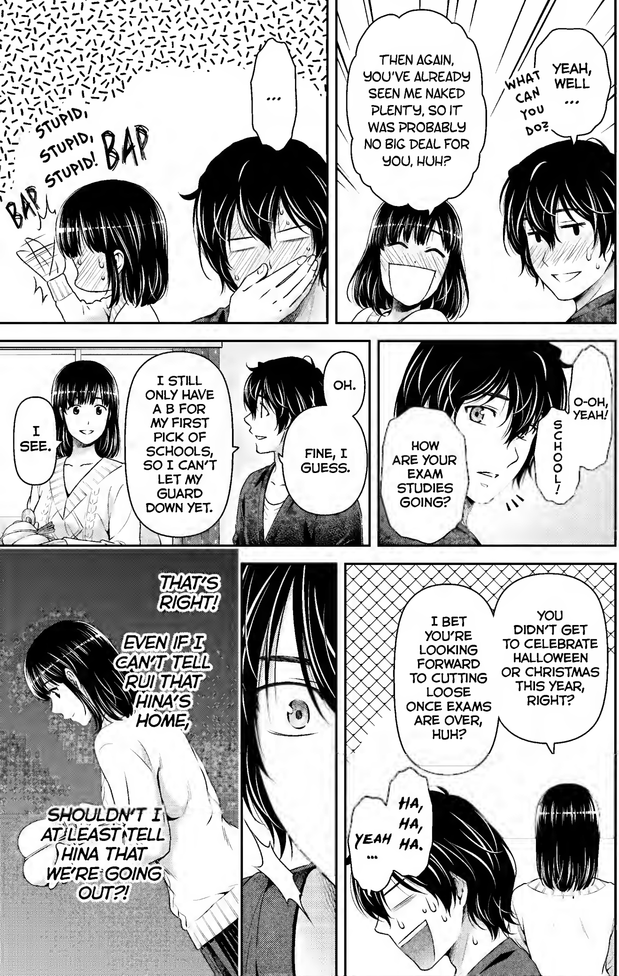

NOPE.
I MEAN, IF I KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS FOR YOU,
IT'S EASIER TO THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING.
PLUS, IT HELPS WITH TIMING TEXTS AND CALLS.
GOOD POINT.
I'LL SET MINE TO ITALY TIME.
HOW DO YOU LIKE THE CITY SO FAR?
I LOVE IT. THE ARCHITECTURE IS GORGEOUS.
OH, RIGHT. I GOT HIT ON BY LIKE 5 PEOPLE WALKING DOWN THE STREET. I GUESS THAT'S THAT LAND OF AMORE FOR YOU.
WHA ...?
DON'T SOUND SO WORRIED. AS IF I'D ACTUALLY GO WITH THEM.
YOU'D BETTER NOT CHEAT ON ME DURING THE FIRST SHRINE VISIT OF THE YEAR, TOO.
LIKE HELL I WOULD!
I MEAN, THE SCENERY'S GREAT,
THE FOOD'S DELICIOUS,
AND EVERYTHING'S NEW AND EXCITING,

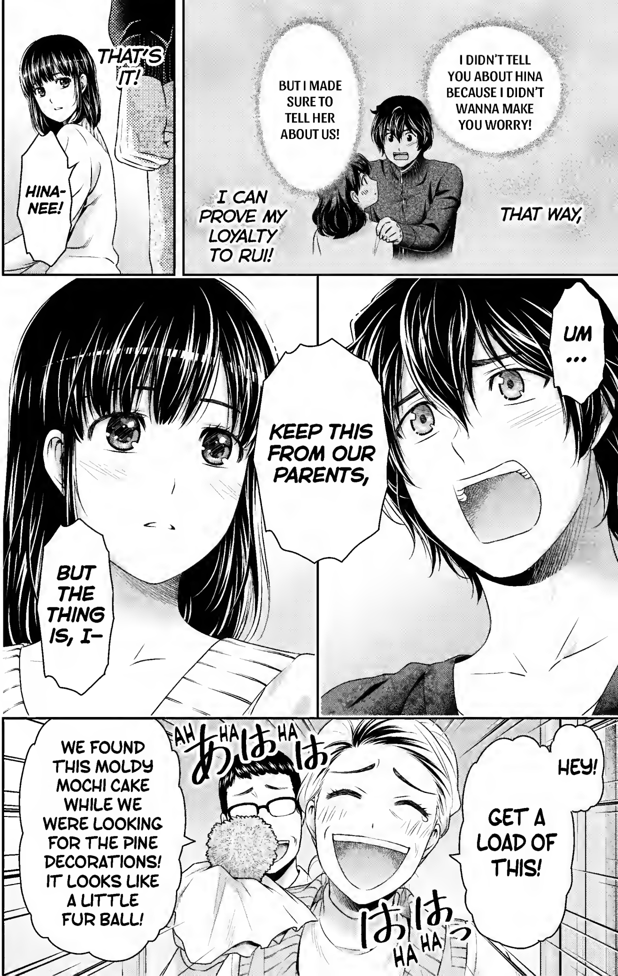

BUT I BET IT'D BE EVEN MORE FUN...
...IF YOU WERE HERE WITH ME.
UM ...
HEY, RUI.
ACTUALLY ...
HM?
... NAH.
NEVER MIND.
HEY, DON'T LEAVE ME HANGING LIKE THAT.
IT'S NOTHING.
I JUST MISS YOU, THAT'S ALL.
HEY.
GET CLOSER TO THE SCREEN.

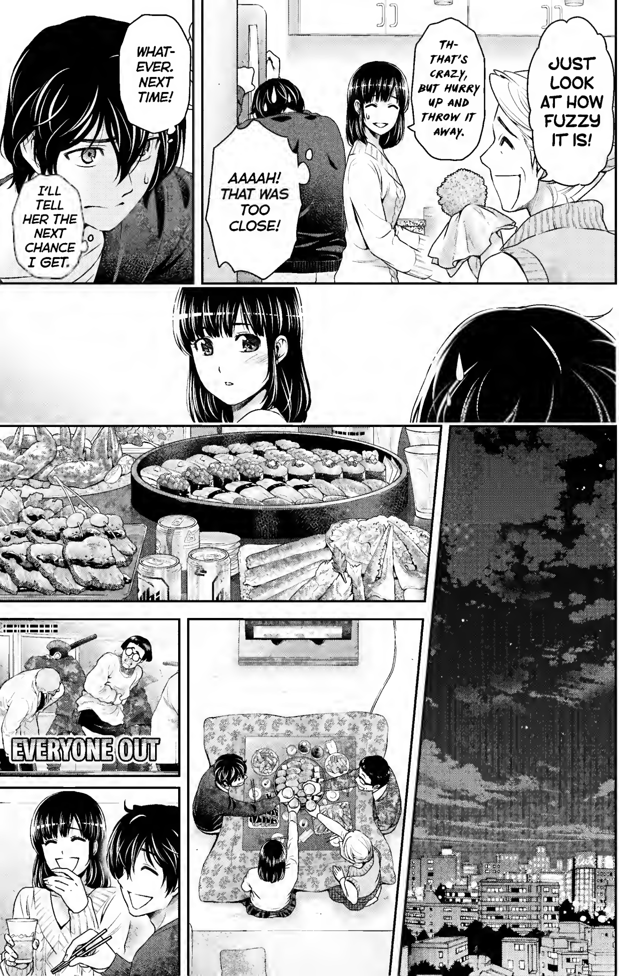

IT'S ONLY OVER SKYPE, BUT...
HE, HE...
OKAY.
I SHOULD GET TO BED. GOODNIGHT.
NIGHT.
I'LL CALL YOU AGAIN TOMORROW.
'KAY.

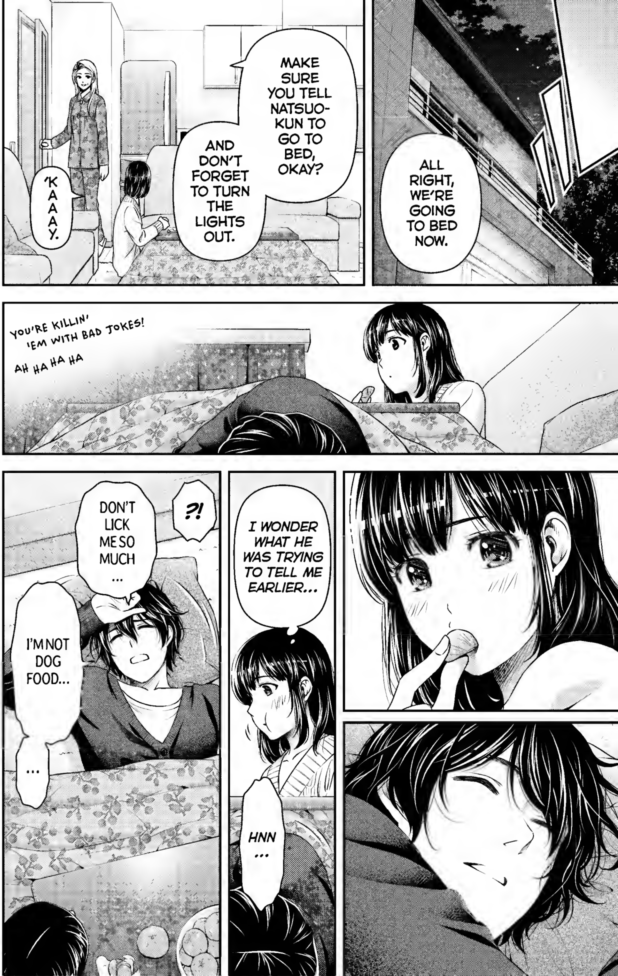

AAAAH!
FWIP
I CAN'T TELL HER!
I, MEAN,
WHAT IF TELLING HER HINA'S HOME...
...WIPES THAT SMILE OFF HER FACE AND MAKES HER WORRY?
WHAT'S A DOMESTIC BOYFRIEND SUPPOSED TO DO?!
WE'RE HOME!
WELCOME BACK.
WE BOUGHT PLENTY!
THERE'S SUSHI, CRAB...
ROAST BEEF, TOO.
ANYTHING I CAN HELP WITH?
OH.
CAN YOU PUT THE DRINKS IN THE FRIDGE?
OH, RIGHT. WE HAVE TO PUT UP THE NEW YEAR'S DECORATIONS.
WHERE DID I PUT THEM LAST YEAR?

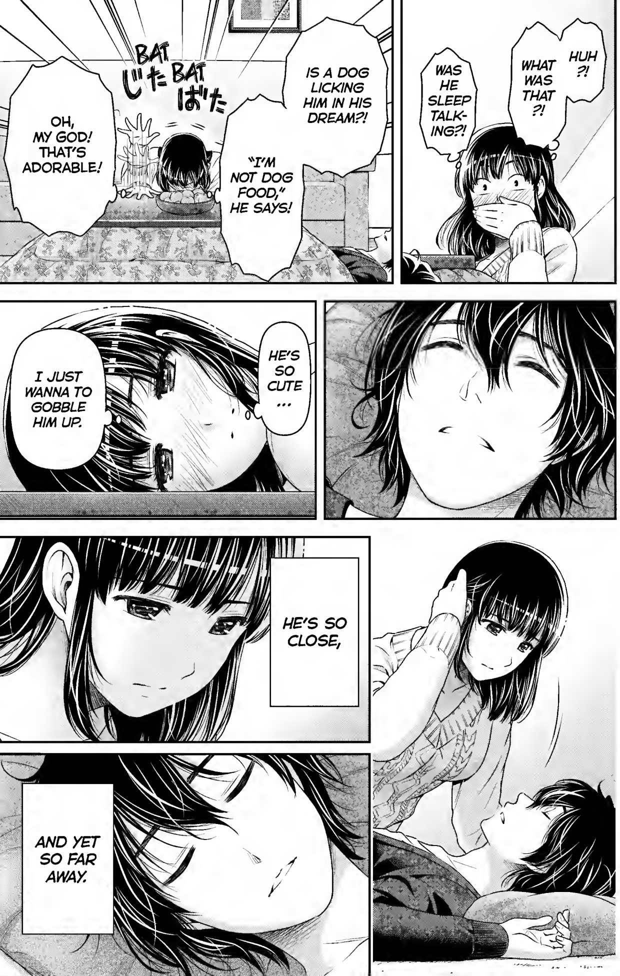

I DON'T THINK WE DECORATED LAST YEAR.
OHH. THAT'S RIGHT!
...
WELL, THIS IS AWKWARD. I NEED TO SAY SOMETHING...
HEY...
SORRY ABOUT YESTERDAY.
I ENDED UP CAUSING TROUBLE FOR YOU AS SOON AS I GOT HOME...
NAH... IT WASN'T ANY TROUBLE.
I'M STILL MORTIFIED.
I WISH I'D HAVE AT LEAST PASSED OUT IN MY UNDERWEAR OR SOMETHING...
SUGAR ROASTED MOCHI

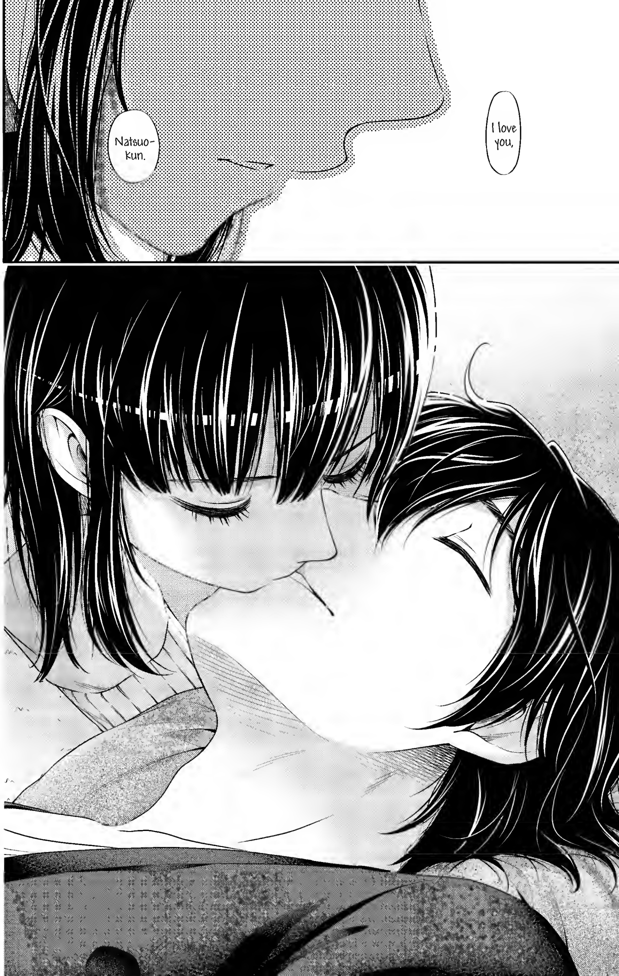

YEAH, WELL ...
WHAT CAN YOU DO?
THEN AGAIN, YOU'VE ALREADY SEEN ME NAKED PLENTY, SO IT WAS PROBABLY NO BIG DEAL FOR YOU, HUH?
...
STUPID, STUPID, STUPID!
BAP
BAP
O-OH, YEAH!
SCHOOL!
HOW ARE YOUR EXAM STUDIES GOING?
OH.
FINE, I GUESS.
I STILL ONLY HAVE A B FOR MY FIRST PICK OF SCHOOLS, SO I CAN'T LET MY GUARD DOWN YET.
I SEE.
YOU DIDN'T GET TO CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN OR CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR, RIGHT?
I BET YOU'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO CUTTING LOOSE ONCE EXAMS ARE OVER, HUH?
HA, HA, HA.
YEAH ...
THAT'S RIGHT!
EVEN IF I CAN'T TELL RUI THAT HINA'S HOME,
SHOULDN'T I AT LEAST TELL HINA THAT WE'RE GOING OUT?!


I DIDN'T TELL YOU ABOUT HINA BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANNA MAKE YOU WORRY!
BUT I MADE SURE TO TELL HER ABOUT US!
THAT WAY,
I CAN PROVE MY LOYALTY TO RUI!
THAT'S IT!
HINA-NEE!
UM ...
KEEP THIS FROM OUR PARENTS,
BUT THE THING IS, I–
HEY!
GET A LOAD OF THIS!
あははは
AH HA HA
WE FOUND THIS MOLDY MOCHI CAKE WHILE WE WERE LOOKING FOR THE PINE DECORATIONS! IT LOOKS LIKE A LITTLE FUR BALL!
ははっ
HA HA

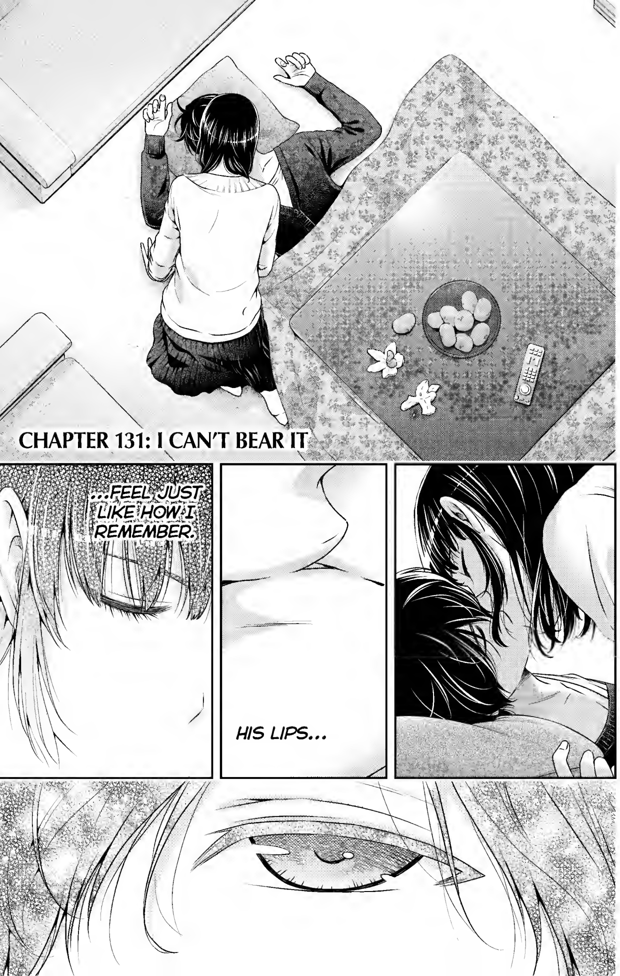

JUST LOOK AT HOW FUZZY IT IS!
TH-THAT'S CRAZY, BUT HURRY UP AND THROW IT AWAY.
AAAAH! THAT WAS TOO CLOSE!
WHATEVER. NEXT TIME!
I'LL TELL HER THE NEXT CHANCE I GET.
EVERYONE OUT

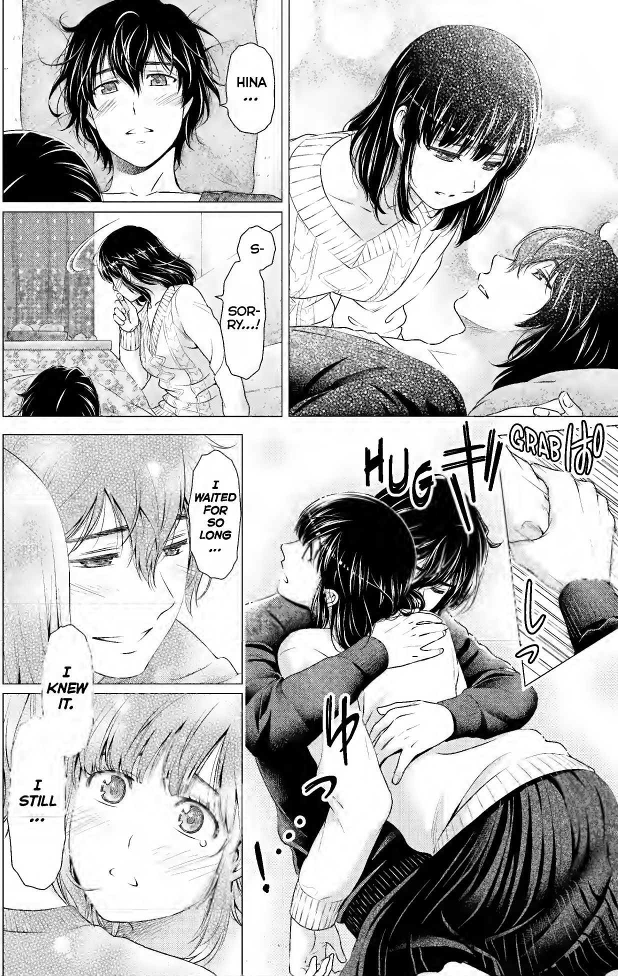

ALL RIGHT, WE'RE GOING TO BED NOW.
MAKE SURE YOU TELL NATSUO-KUN TO GO TO BED, OKAY?
AND DON'T FORGET TO TURN THE LIGHTS OUT.
'KAAAAY.
YOU'RE KILLIN' 'EM WITH BAD JOKES!
AH HA HA HA
I WONDER WHAT HE WAS TRYING TO TELL ME EARLIER...
HNN...
?!
DON'T LICK ME SO MUCH...
I'M NOT DOG FOOD...
...

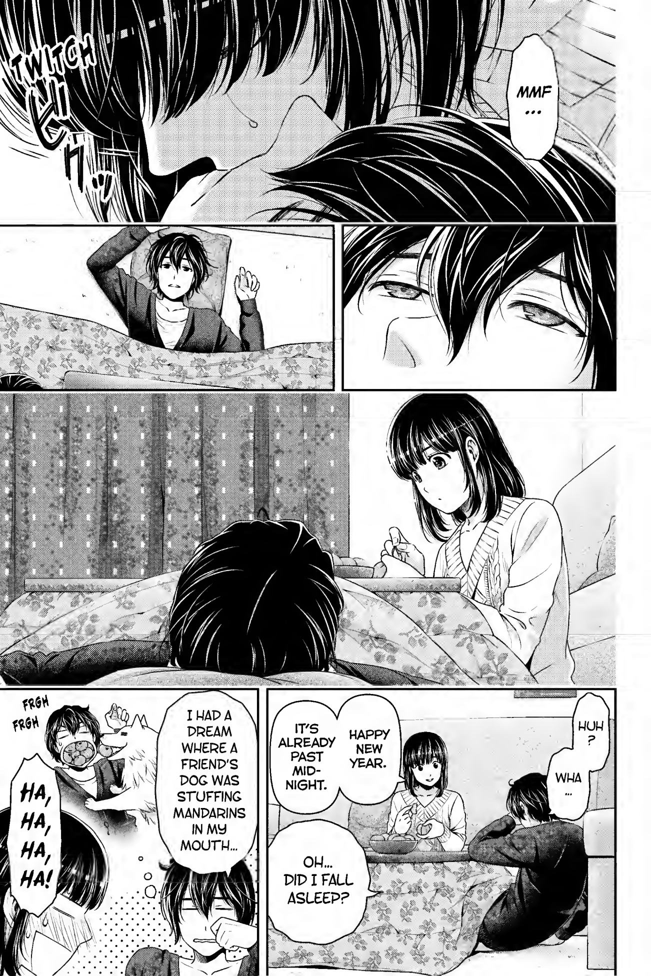

HUH?!
WHAT WAS THAT?!
WAS HE SLEEP TALKING?!
IS A DOG LICKING HIM IN HIS DREAM?!
"I'M NOT DOG FOOD," HE SAYS!
BAT じた BAT ばた
OH, MY GOD! THAT'S ADORABLE!
HE'S SO CUTE ...
I JUST WANNA TO GOBBLE HIM UP.
HE'S SO CLOSE,
AND YET SO FAR AWAY.

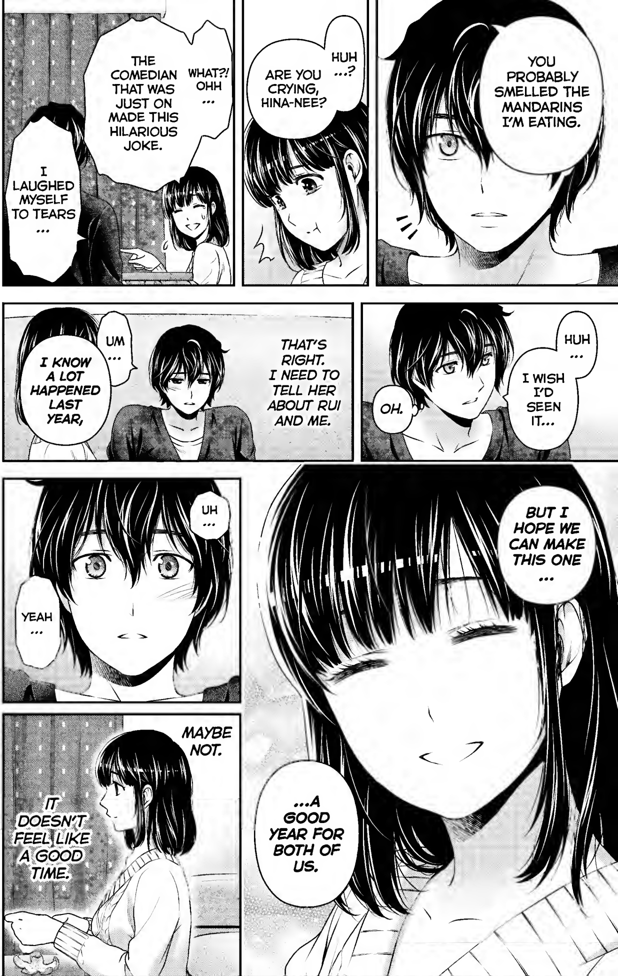

I love you,
Natsuo-kun.

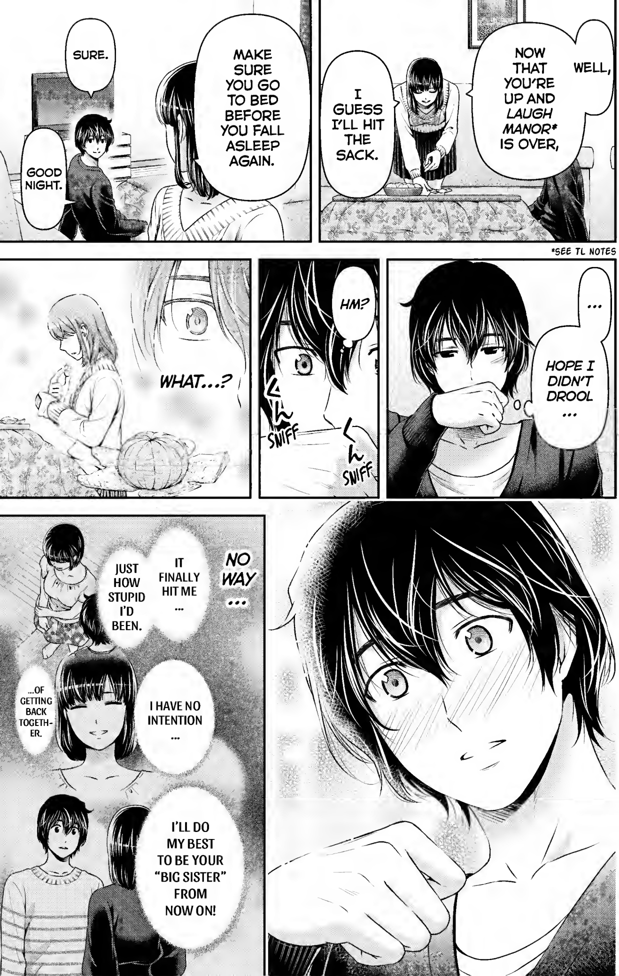
CHAPTER 131: I CAN'T BEAR IT


HIS LIPS...
...FEEL JUST LIKE HOW I REMEMBER.

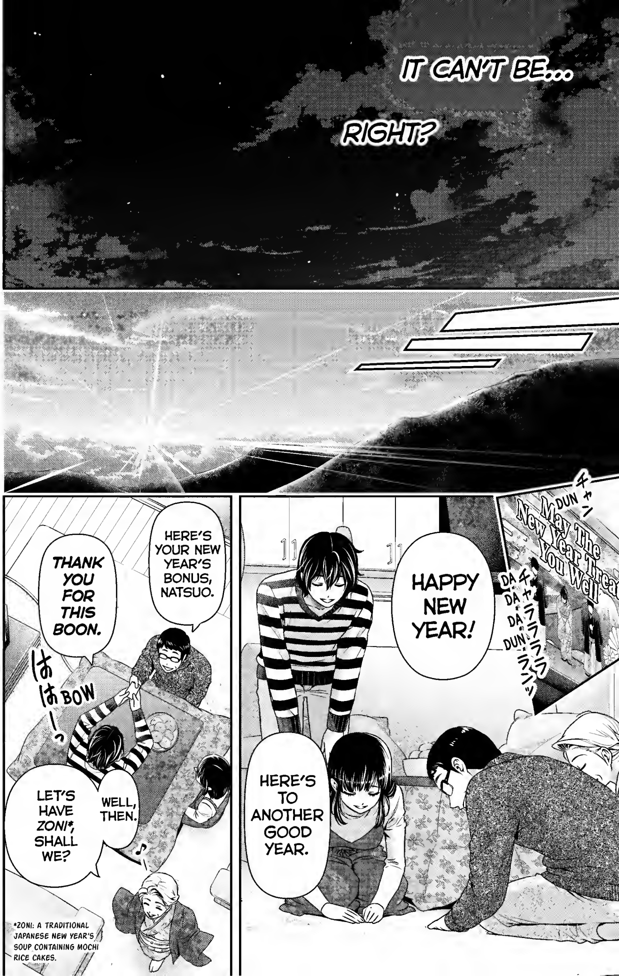

HINA...
S-
SORRY...!
HUG
GRAB
I WAITED FOR SO LONG...
I KNEW IT.
I STILL...


MMF ...
TWITCH
ビクッ
HUH ?
WHA ...
HAPPY NEW YEAR.
IT'S ALREADY PAST MID-NIGHT.
OH... DID I FALL ASLEEP?
I HAD A DREAM WHERE A FRIEND'S DOG WAS STUFFING MANDARINS IN MY MOUTH...
FRGH FRGH
HA, HA, HA, HA!

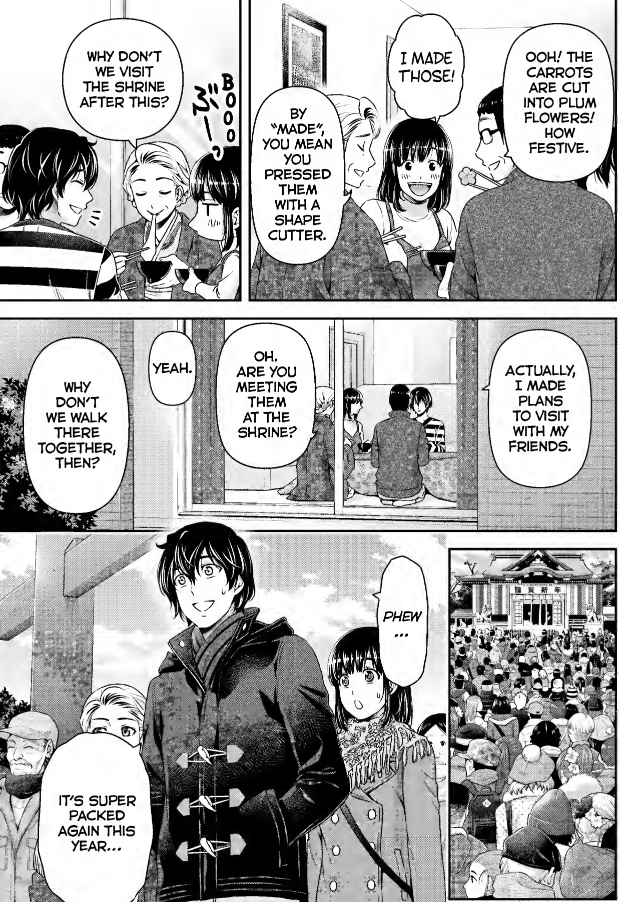

YOU PROBABLY SMELLED THE MANDARINS I'M EATING.
HUH ...?
ARE YOU CRYING, HINA-NEE?
WHAT?! OHH ...
THE COMEDIAN THAT WAS JUST ON MADE THIS HILARIOUS JOKE.
I LAUGHED MYSELF TO TEARS ...
HUH ...
I WISH I'D SEEN IT...
OH.
THAT'S RIGHT. I NEED TO TELL HER ABOUT RUI AND ME.
UM ...
I KNOW A LOT HAPPENED LAST YEAR,
BUT I HOPE WE CAN MAKE THIS ONE ...
...A GOOD YEAR FOR BOTH OF US.
UH ...
YEAH ...
MAYBE NOT.
IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE A GOOD TIME.

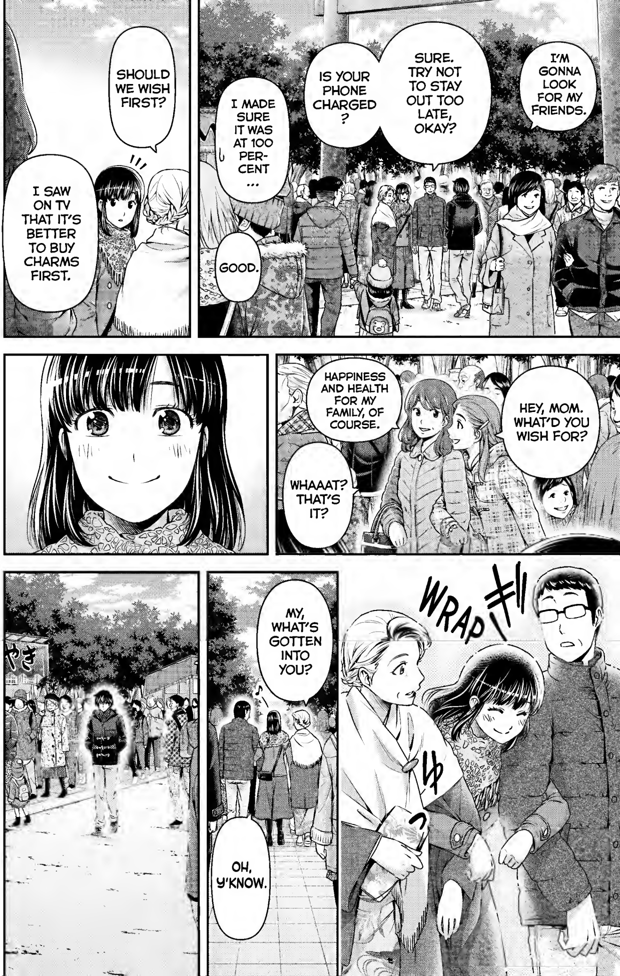

WELL,
NOW THAT YOU'RE UP AND *LAUGH MANOR** IS OVER,
I GUESS I'LL HIT THE SACK.
MAKE SURE YOU GO TO BED BEFORE YOU FALL ASLEEP AGAIN.
SURE.
GOOD NIGHT.
...
HOPE I DIDN'T DROOL ...
HM?
くん
SNIFF
くん
SNIFF
WHAT...?
NO WAY ...
IT FINALLY HIT ME ...
JUST HOW STUPID I'D BEEN.
I HAVE NO INTENTION ...
...OF GETTING BACK TOGETHER.
I'LL DO MY BEST TO BE YOUR "BIG SISTER" FROM NOW ON!

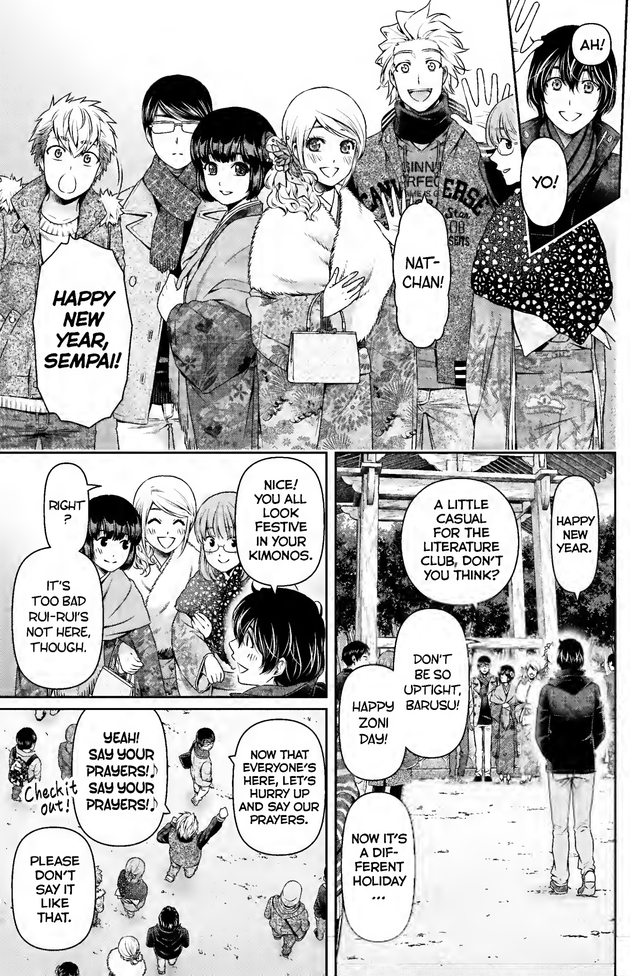
*SEE TL NOTES

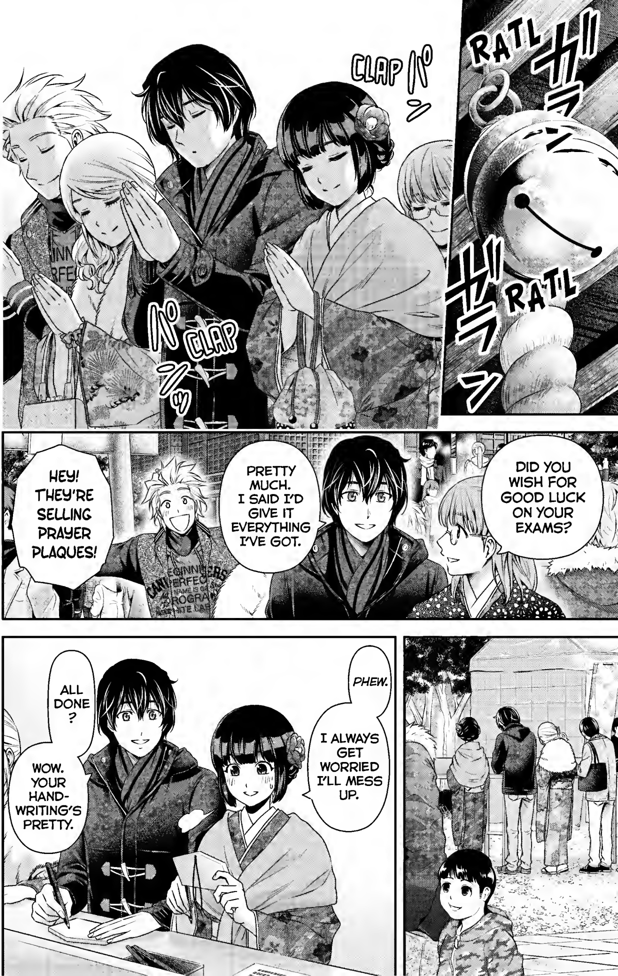

IT CAN'T BE...
RIGHT?
チャン DUN
May The New Year Trea You Well
チャラララランッ DA DA DA DUN
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
HERE'S TO ANOTHER GOOD YEAR.
HERE'S YOUR NEW YEAR'S BONUS, NATSUO.
THANK YOU FOR THIS BOON.
ははーっ BOW
WELL, THEN.
LET'S HAVE *ZONI**, SHALL WE?
♪

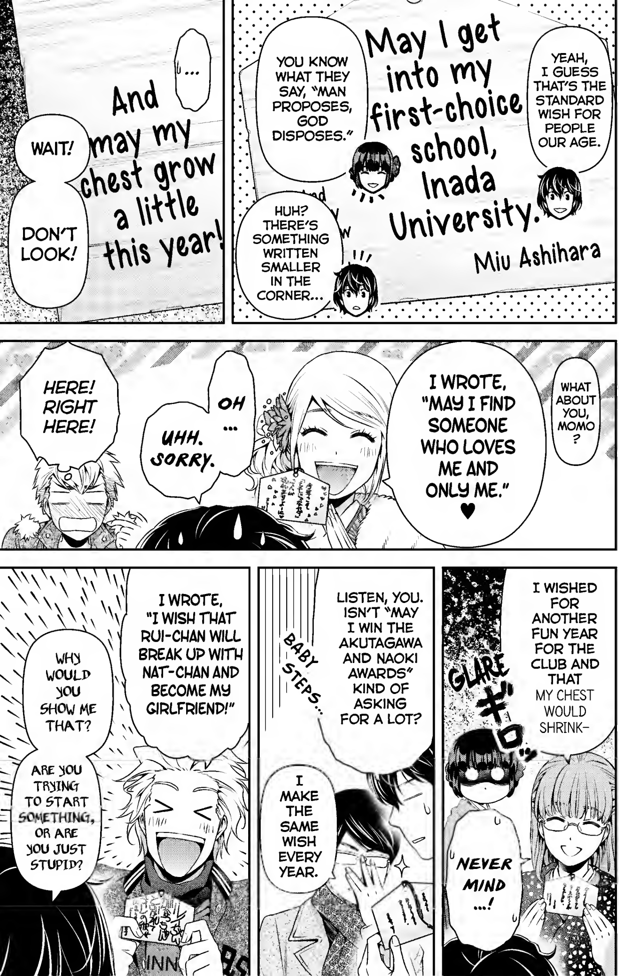
*ZONI: A TRADITIONAL JAPANESE NEW YEAR'S SOUP CONTAINING MOCHI RICE CAKES.

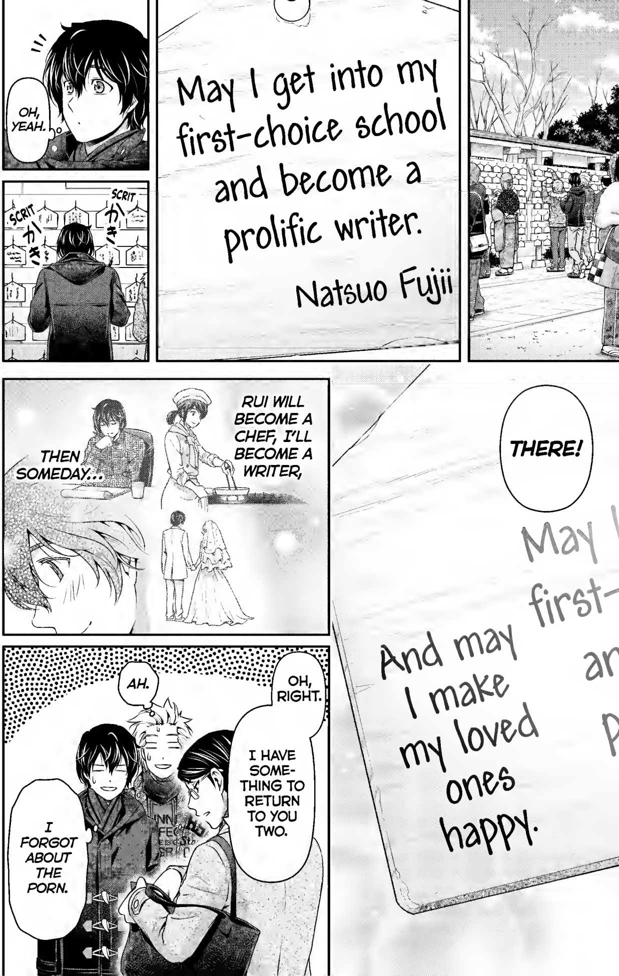

OOH! THE CARROTS ARE CUT INTO PLUM FLOWERS! HOW FESTIVE.
I MADE THOSE!
BY "MADE", YOU MEAN YOU PRESSED THEM WITH A SHAPE CUTTER.
WHY DON'T WE VISIT THE SHRINE AFTER THIS?
ぶー BOOO
ACTUALLY, I MADE PLANS TO VISIT WITH MY FRIENDS.
OH. ARE YOU MEETING THEM AT THE SHRINE?
YEAH.
WHY DON'T WE WALK THERE TOGETHER, THEN?
謹賀新年
PHEW...
IT'S SUPER PACKED AGAIN THIS YEAR...

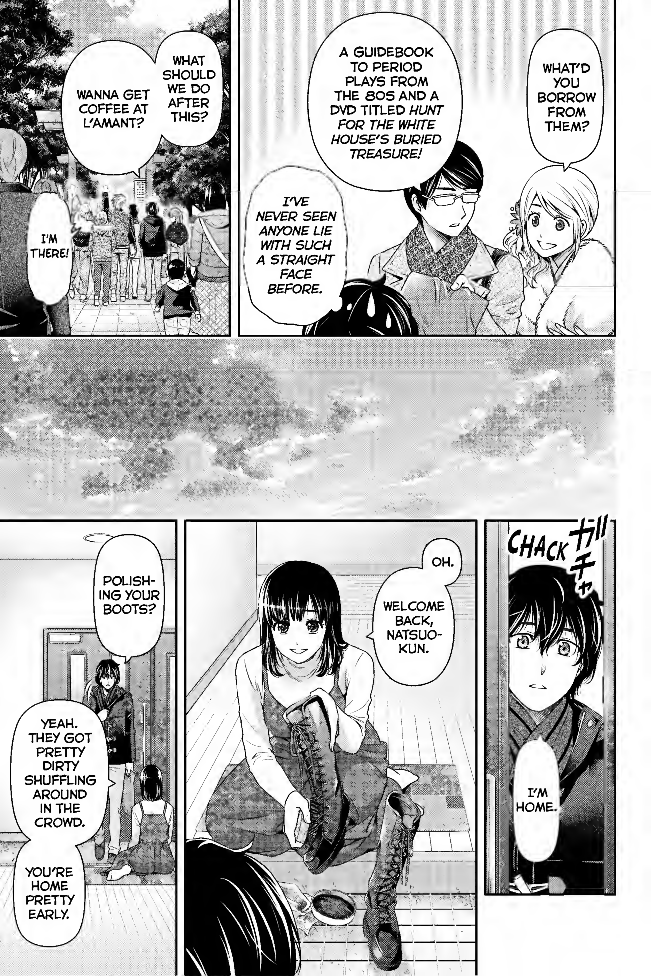

I'M GONNA LOOK FOR MY FRIENDS.
SURE. TRY NOT TO STAY OUT TOO LATE, OKAY?
IS YOUR PHONE CHARGED?
I MADE SURE IT WAS AT 100 PERCENT...
GOOD.
SHOULD WE WISH FIRST?
I SAW ON TV THAT IT'S BETTER TO BUY CHARMS FIRST.
HEY, MOM. WHAT'D YOU WISH FOR?
HAPPINESS AND HEALTH FOR MY FAMILY, OF COURSE.
WHAAAT? THAT'S IT?
WRAP
MY, WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?
OH, Y'KNOW.
やき

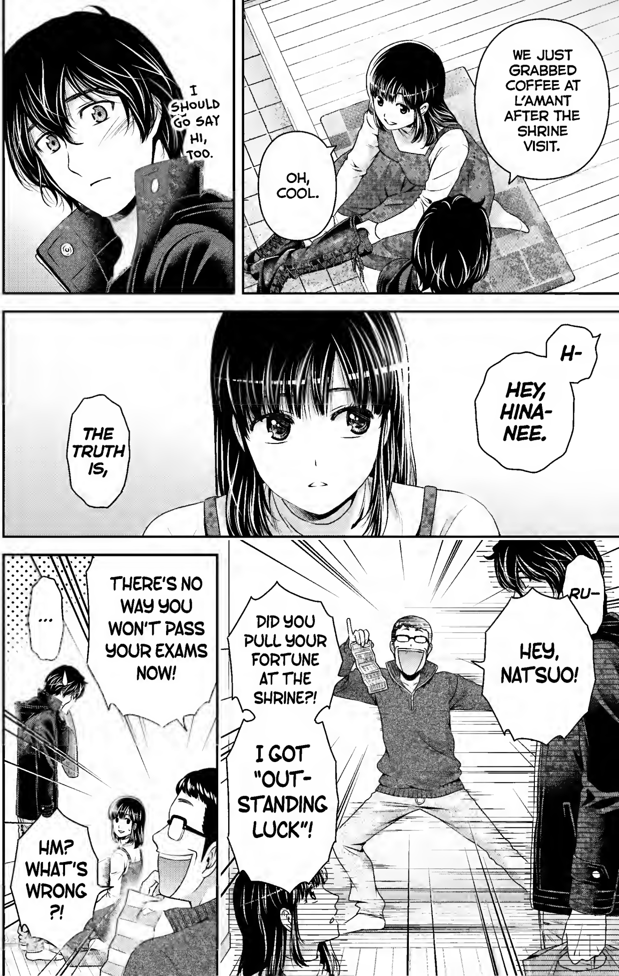

AH!
YO!
NAT-CHAN!
HAPPY NEW YEAR, SEMPAI!
HAPPY NEW YEAR.
A LITTLE CASUAL FOR THE LITERATURE CLUB, DON'T YOU THINK?
DON'T BE SO UPTIGHT, BARUSU!
HAPPY ZONI DAY!
NOW IT'S A DIFFERENT HOLIDAY...
NICE! YOU ALL LOOK FESTIVE IN YOUR KIMONOS.
RIGHT?
IT'S TOO BAD RUI-RUI'S NOT HERE, THOUGH.
NOW THAT EVERYONE'S HERE, LET'S HURRY UP AND SAY OUR PRAYERS.
YEAH! SAY YOUR PRAYERS!♪ SAY YOUR PRAYERS!♪
Check it out!
PLEASE DON'T SAY IT LIKE THAT.

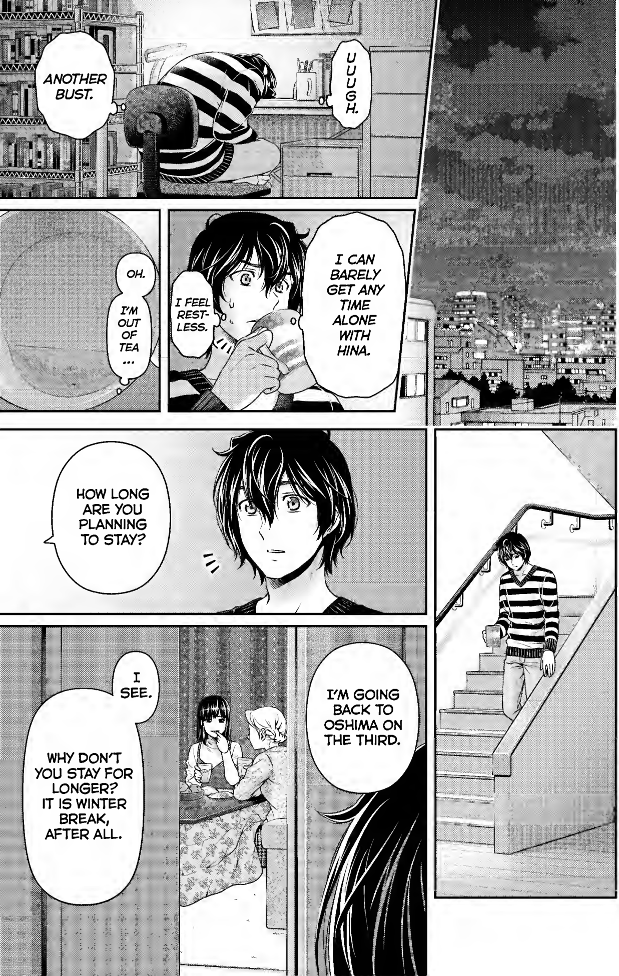

RATL
カラン
ガラン
RATL
CLAP パン
CLAP パシッ
DID YOU WISH FOR GOOD LUCK ON YOUR EXAMS?
PRETTY MUCH. I SAID I'D GIVE IT EVERYTHING I'VE GOT.
HEY! THEY'RE SELLING PRAYER PLAQUES!
PHEW.
I ALWAYS GET WORRIED I'LL MESS UP.
ALL DONE?
WOW. YOUR HANDWRITING'S PRETTY.

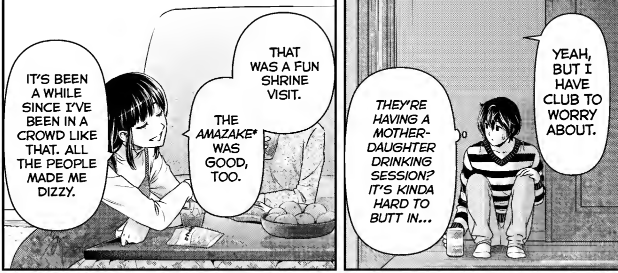

May I get into my first-choice school, Inada University.
Miu Ashihara
YEAH, I GUESS THAT'S THE STANDARD WISH FOR PEOPLE OUR AGE.
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY, "MAN PROPOSES, GOD DISPOSES."
HUH? THERE'S SOMETHING WRITTEN SMALLER IN THE CORNER...
And may my chest grow a little this year!
...
WAIT!
DON'T LOOK!
WHAT ABOUT YOU, MOMO?
I WROTE, "MAY I FIND SOMEONE WHO LOVES ME AND ONLY ME." ♥
OH ...
UHH. SORRY.
HERE! RIGHT HERE!
I WISHED FOR ANOTHER FUN YEAR FOR THE CLUB AND THAT MY CHEST WOULD SHRINK–
GLARE
ギロッ
NEVER MIND ...!
LISTEN, YOU. ISN'T "MAY I WIN THE AKUTAGAWA AND NAOKI AWARDS" KIND OF ASKING FOR A LOT?
BABY STEPS...
I MAKE THE SAME WISH EVERY YEAR.
I WROTE, "I WISH THAT RUI-CHAN WILL BREAK UP WITH NAT-CHAN AND BECOME MY GIRLFRIEND!"
WHY WOULD YOU SHOW ME THAT?
ARE YOU TRYING TO START SOMETHING, OR ARE YOU JUST STUPID?


May I get into my first-choice school and become a prolific writer.
Natsuo Fujii
OH, YEAH.
SCRIT かき
SCRIT かき
THERE!
May I
first-
And may I make my loved ones happy.
an
p
RUI WILL BECOME A CHEF, I'LL BECOME A WRITER,
THEN SOMEDAY...
OH, RIGHT.
I HAVE SOMETHING TO RETURN TO YOU TWO.
AH.
I FORGOT ABOUT THE PORN.

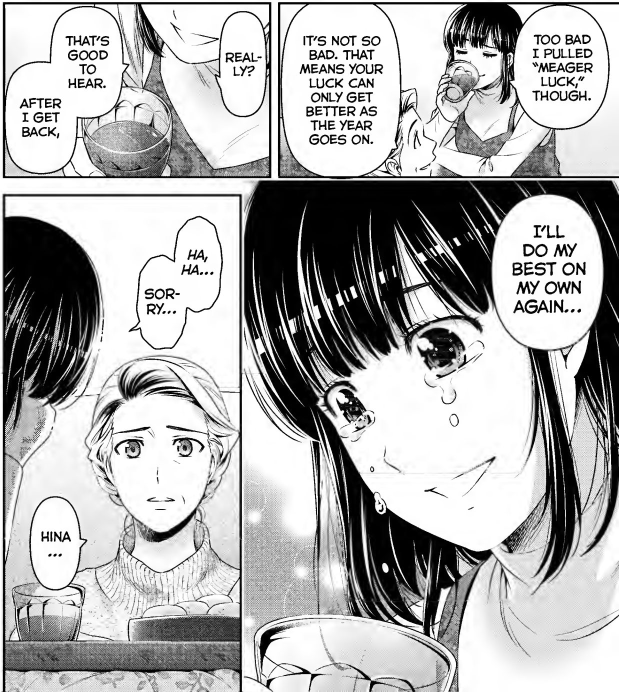

WHAT'D YOU BORROW FROM THEM?
A GUIDEBOOK TO PERIOD PLAYS FROM THE 80S AND A DVD TITLED *HUNT FOR THE WHITE HOUSE'S BURIED TREASURE!*
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE LIE WITH SUCH A STRAIGHT FACE BEFORE.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO AFTER THIS?
WANNA GET COFFEE AT L'AMANT?
I'M THERE!
CHACK ガチャ
I'M HOME.
OH.
WELCOME BACK, NATSUO-KUN.
POLISHING YOUR BOOTS?
YEAH. THEY GOT PRETTY DIRTY SHUFFLING AROUND IN THE CROWD.
YOU'RE HOME PRETTY EARLY.

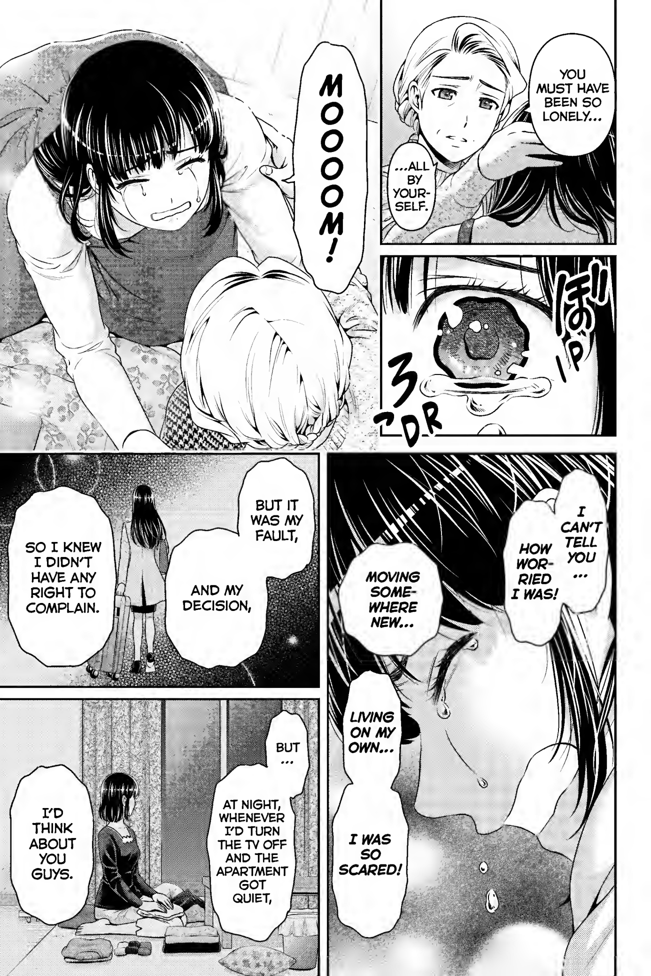

WE JUST GRABBED COFFEE AT L'AMANT AFTER THE SHRINE VISIT.
OH, COOL.
I SHOULD GO SAY HI, TOO.
H-
HEY, HINA-NEE.
THE TRUTH IS,
RU-
HEY, NATSUO!
DID YOU PULL YOUR FORTUNE AT THE SHRINE?!
I GOT "OUT-STANDING LUCK"!
THERE'S NO WAY YOU WON'T PASS YOUR EXAMS NOW!
...
HM? WHAT'S WRONG?!

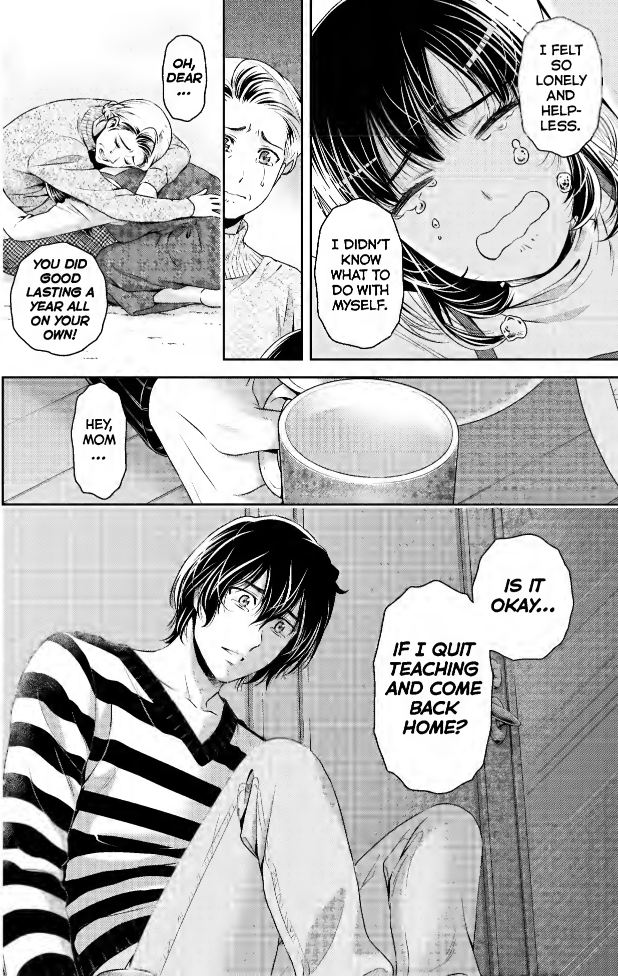

UUUGH.
ANOTHER BUST.
I CAN BARELY GET ANY TIME ALONE WITH HINA.
I FEEL RESTLESS.
OH. I'M OUT OF TEA...
HOW LONG ARE YOU PLANNING TO STAY?
I'M GOING BACK TO OSHIMA ON THE THIRD.
I SEE.
WHY DON'T YOU STAY FOR LONGER? IT IS WINTER BREAK, AFTER ALL.


YEAH, BUT I HAVE CLUB TO WORRY ABOUT.
THEY'RE HAVING A MOTHER-DAUGHTER DRINKING SESSION? IT'S KINDA HARD TO BUTT IN...
THAT WAS A FUN SHRINE VISIT.
THE AMAZAKE* WAS GOOD, TOO.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE BEEN IN A CROWD LIKE THAT. ALL THE PEOPLE MADE ME DIZZY.

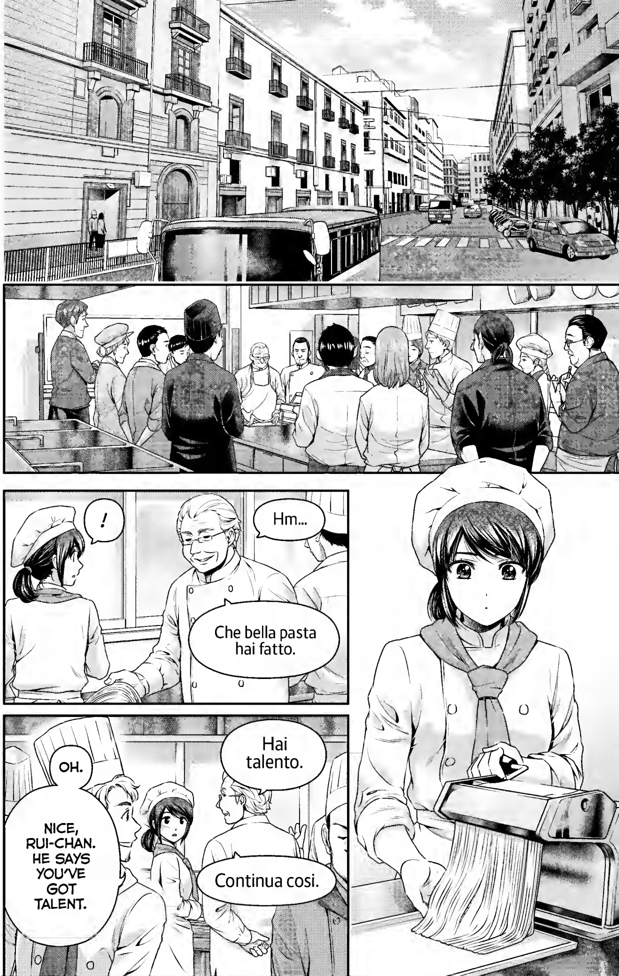
*A SWEET DRINK MADE FROM FERMENTED RICE.

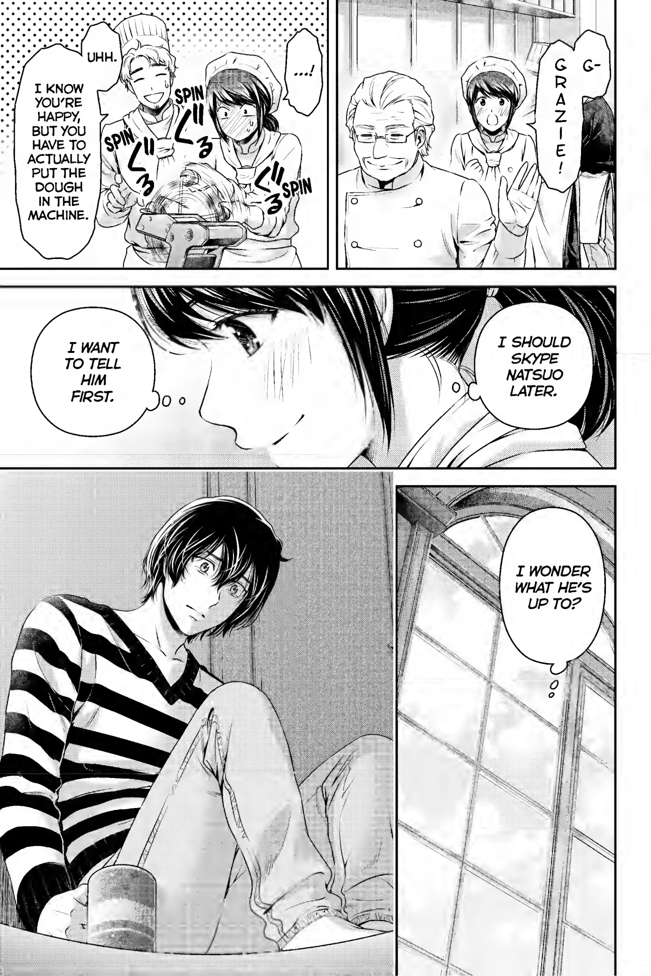

TOO BAD I PULLED "MEAGER LUCK," THOUGH.
IT'S NOT SO BAD. THAT MEANS YOUR LUCK CAN ONLY GET BETTER AS THE YEAR GOES ON.
REALLY?
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.
AFTER I GET BACK,
I'LL DO MY BEST ON MY OWN AGAIN...
HA, HA...
SORRY...
HINA...

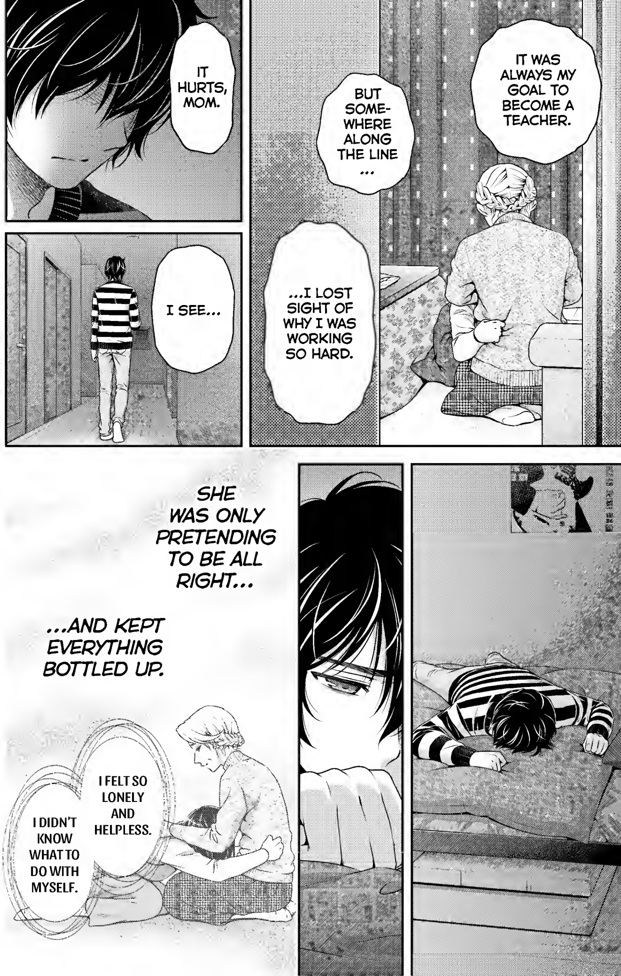

YOU MUST HAVE BEEN SO LONELY...
...ALL BY YOURSELF.
ぽ P
ろ つ DR
MOOOOOM!
I CAN'T TELL YOU...
HOW WORRIED I WAS!
MOVING SOMEWHERE NEW...
LIVING ON MY OWN...
I WAS SO SCARED!
BUT IT WAS MY FAULT,
AND MY DECISION,
SO I KNEW I DIDN'T HAVE ANY RIGHT TO COMPLAIN.
BUT...
AT NIGHT, WHENEVER I'D TURN THE TV OFF AND THE APARTMENT GOT QUIET,
I'D THINK ABOUT YOU GUYS.

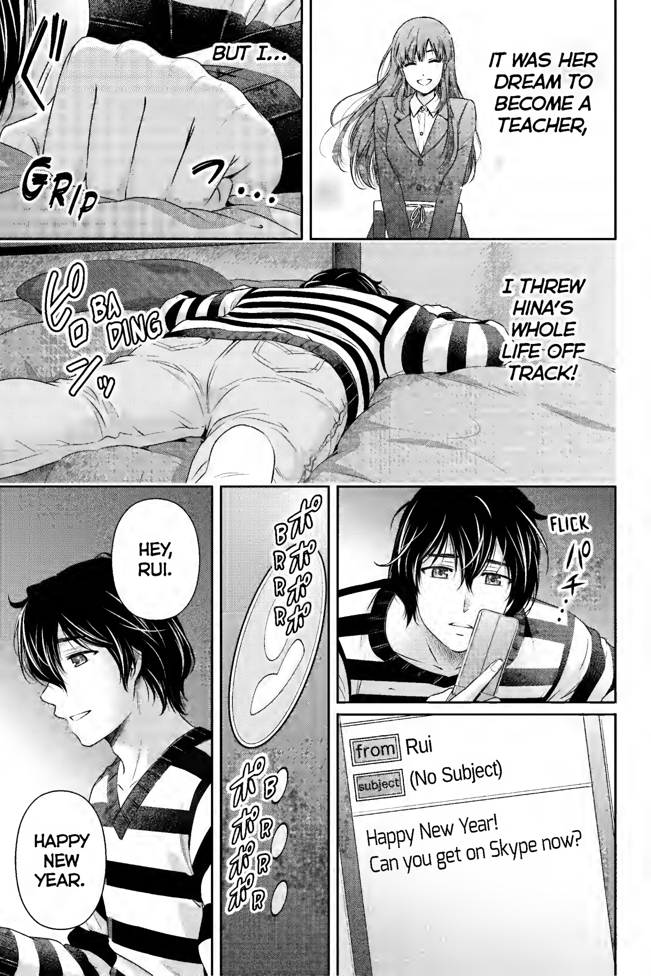

I FELT SO LONELY AND HELPLESS.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF.
OH, DEAR...
YOU DID GOOD LASTING A YEAR ALL ON YOUR OWN!
HEY, MOM...
IS IT OKAY...
IF I QUIT TEACHING AND COME BACK HOME?

CHAPTER 132:
ATONEMENT & DETERMINATION


Hm...
Che bella pasta hai fatto.
!
Hai talento.
Continua cosi.
OH.
NICE, RUI-CHAN. HE SAYS YOU'VE GOT TALENT.

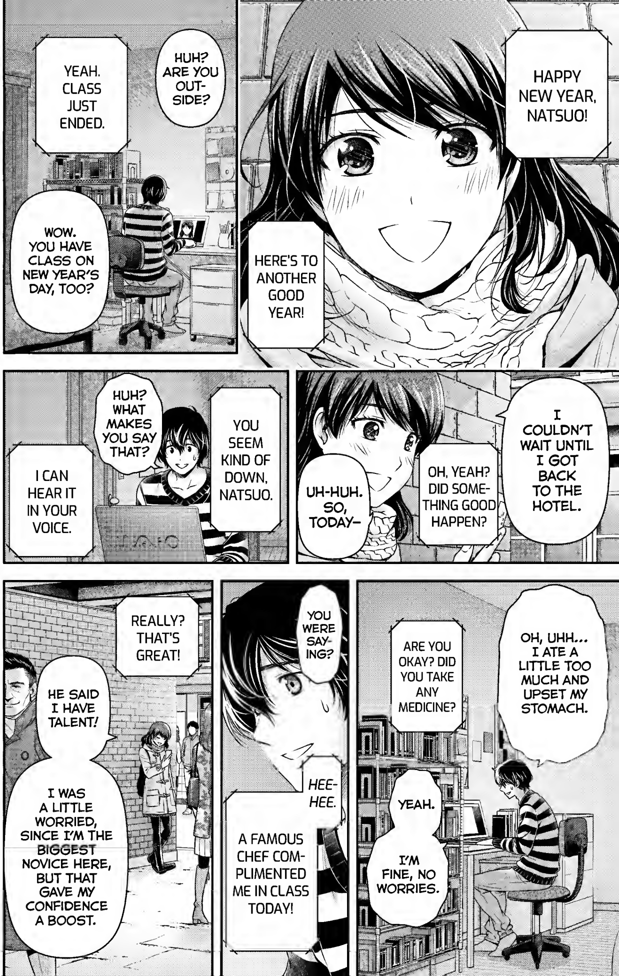

G-GRAZIE!
...!
UHH.
I KNOW YOU'RE HAPPY, BUT YOU HAVE TO ACTUALLY PUT THE DOUGH IN THE MACHINE.
SPIN ぐる
SPIN ぐる
SPIN ぐる
I SHOULD SKYPE NATSUO LATER.
I WANT TO TELL HIM FIRST.
I WONDER WHAT HE'S UP TO?

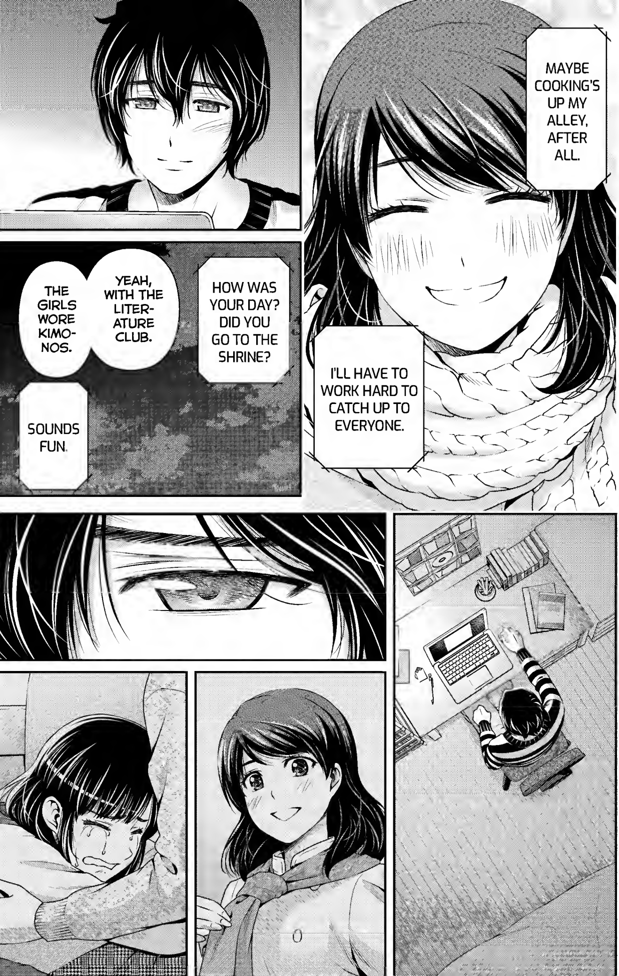

IT WAS ALWAYS MY GOAL TO BECOME A TEACHER.
BUT SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE ...
...I LOST SIGHT OF WHY I WAS WORKING SO HARD.
IT HURTS, MOM.
I SEE...
SHE WAS ONLY PRETENDING TO BE ALL RIGHT...
...AND KEPT EVERYTHING BOTTLED UP.
I FELT SO LONELY AND HELPLESS.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF.

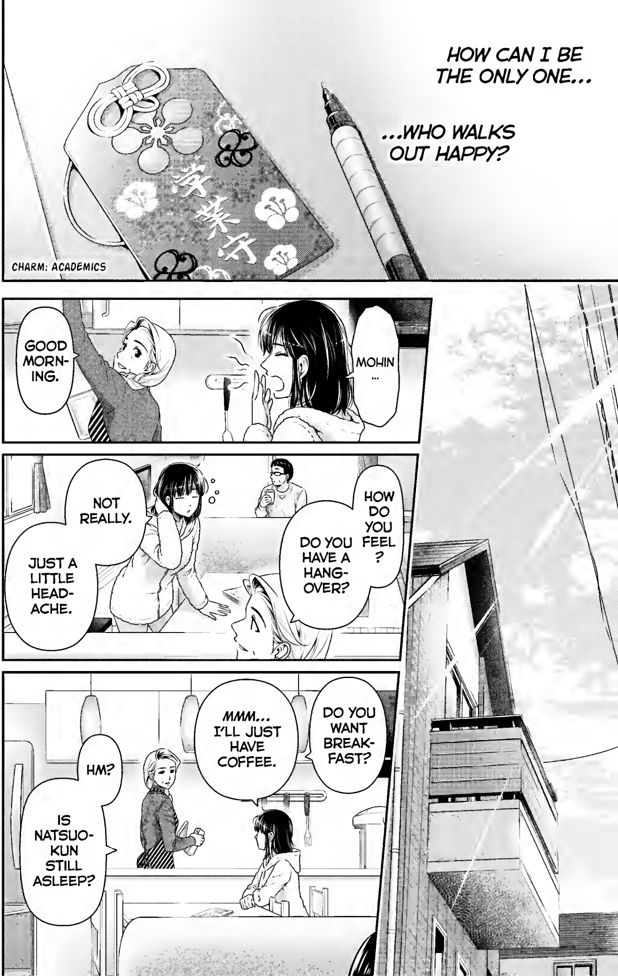

IT WAS HER DREAM TO BECOME A TEACHER,
BUT I...
ぐッ
GRIP
つ...
I THREW HINA'S WHOLE LIFE OFF TRACK!
ピロンッ
BA DING
FLICK
パチ...
ポポポポ
BRRRR
ポポポポ
BRRRR
HEY, RUI.
HAPPY NEW YEAR.

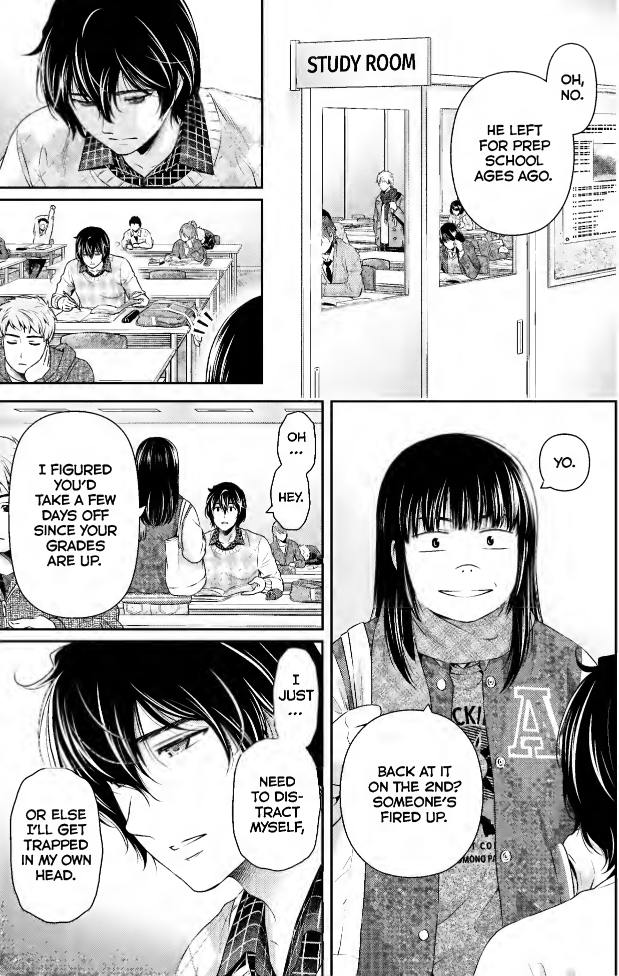
from Rui
subject (No Subject)

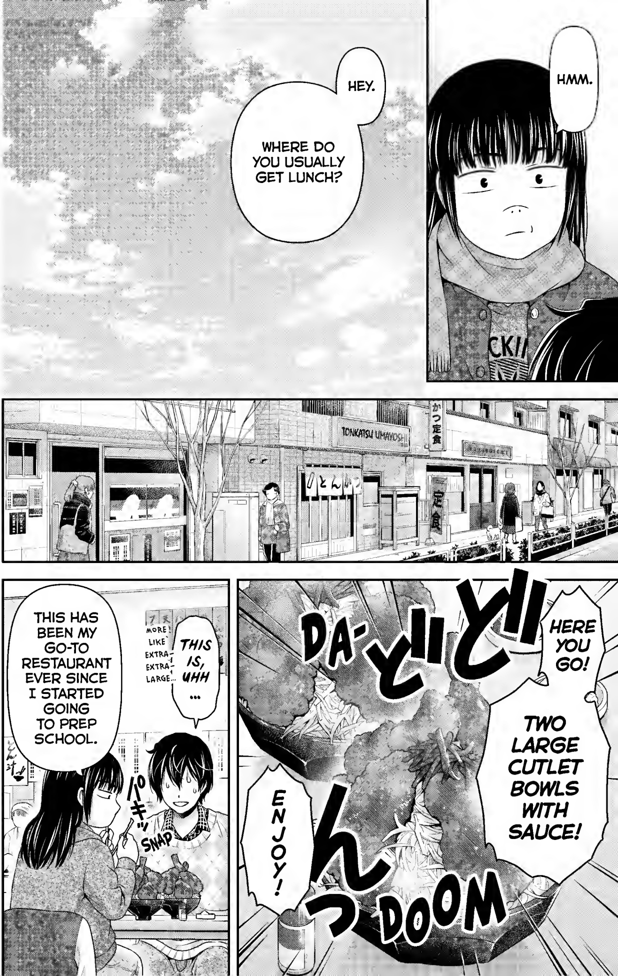
Happy New Year!
Can you get on Skype now?

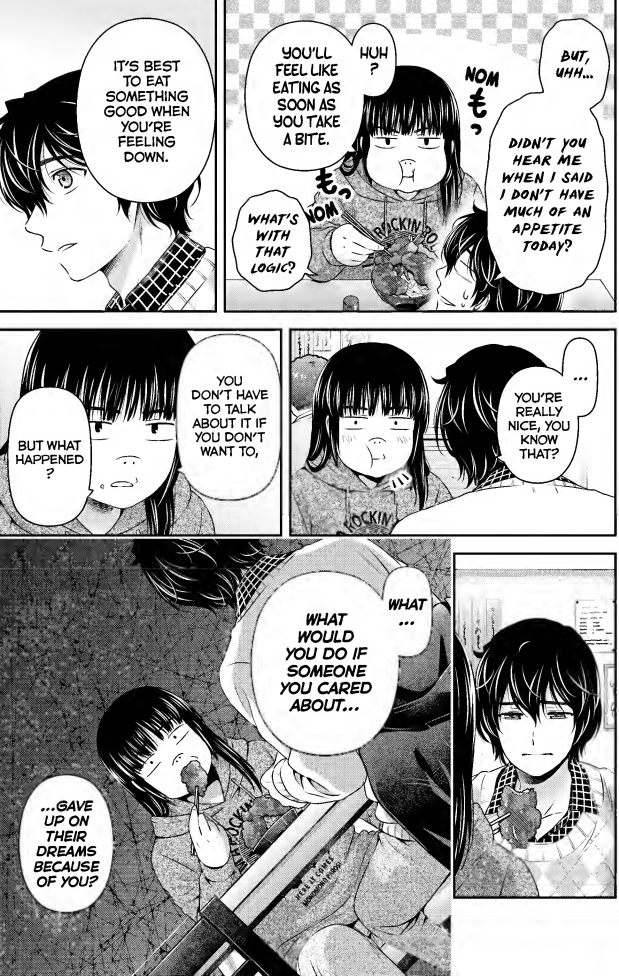

HAPPY NEW YEAR, NATSUO!
HERE'S TO ANOTHER GOOD YEAR!
HUH? ARE YOU OUTSIDE?
YEAH. CLASS JUST ENDED.
WOW. YOU HAVE CLASS ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, TOO?
I COULDN'T WAIT UNTIL I GOT BACK TO THE HOTEL.
OH, YEAH? DID SOMETHING GOOD HAPPEN?
UH-HUH. SO, TODAY—
YOU SEEM KIND OF DOWN, NATSUO.
HUH? WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?
I CAN HEAR IT IN YOUR VOICE.
OH, UHH... I ATE A LITTLE TOO MUCH AND UPSET MY STOMACH.
ARE YOU OKAY? DID YOU TAKE ANY MEDICINE?
YEAH.
I'M FINE, NO WORRIES.
YOU WERE SAYING?
HEE-HEE.
A FAMOUS CHEF COMPLIMENTED ME IN CLASS TODAY!
REALLY? THAT'S GREAT!
HE SAID I HAVE TALENT!
I WAS A LITTLE WORRIED, SINCE I'M THE BIGGEST NOVICE HERE, BUT THAT GAVE MY CONFIDENCE A BOOST.

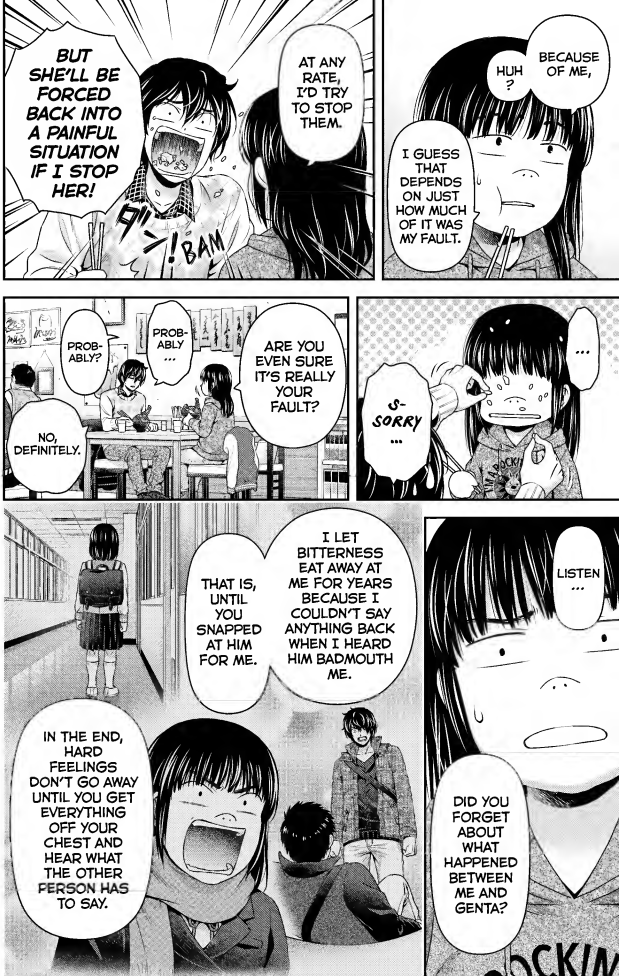

MAYBE COOKING'S UP MY ALLEY, AFTER ALL.
I'LL HAVE TO WORK HARD TO CATCH UP TO EVERYONE.
HOW WAS YOUR DAY? DID YOU GO TO THE SHRINE?
YEAH, WITH THE LITERATURE CLUB.
THE GIRLS WORE KIMONOS.
SOUNDS FUN.

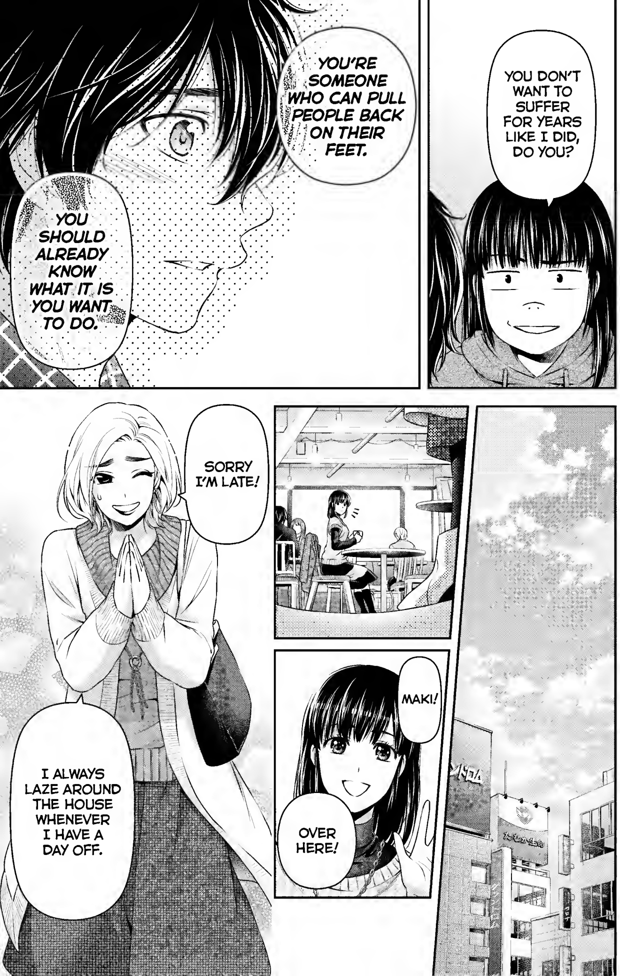

HOW CAN I BE THE ONLY ONE...
...WHO WALKS OUT HAPPY?
学業守
CHARM: ACADEMICS
MOHIN...
GOOD MORNING.
HOW DO YOU FEEL?
DO YOU HAVE A HANGOVER?
NOT REALLY.
JUST A LITTLE HEADACHE.
DO YOU WANT BREAKFAST?
MMM... I'LL JUST HAVE COFFEE.
HM?
IS NATSUO-KUN STILL ASLEEP?

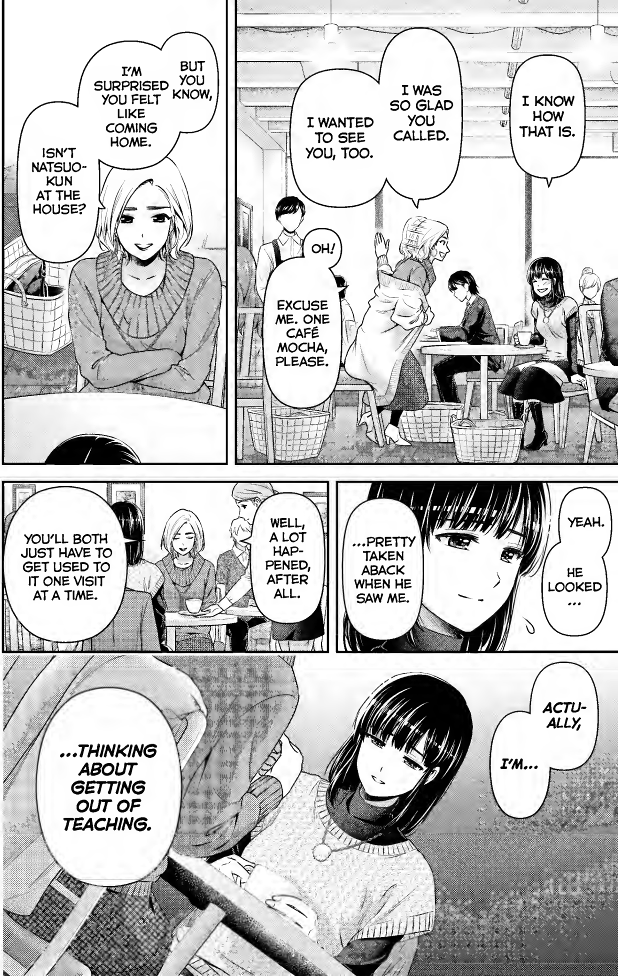

STUDY ROOM
OH, NO.
HE LEFT FOR PREP SCHOOL AGES AGO.
YO.
OH ... HEY.
BACK AT IT ON THE 2ND? SOMEONE'S FIRED UP.
I FIGURED YOU'D TAKE A FEW DAYS OFF SINCE YOUR GRADES ARE UP.
I JUST ...
NEED TO DISTRACT MYSELF,
OR ELSE I'LL GET TRAPPED IN MY OWN HEAD.

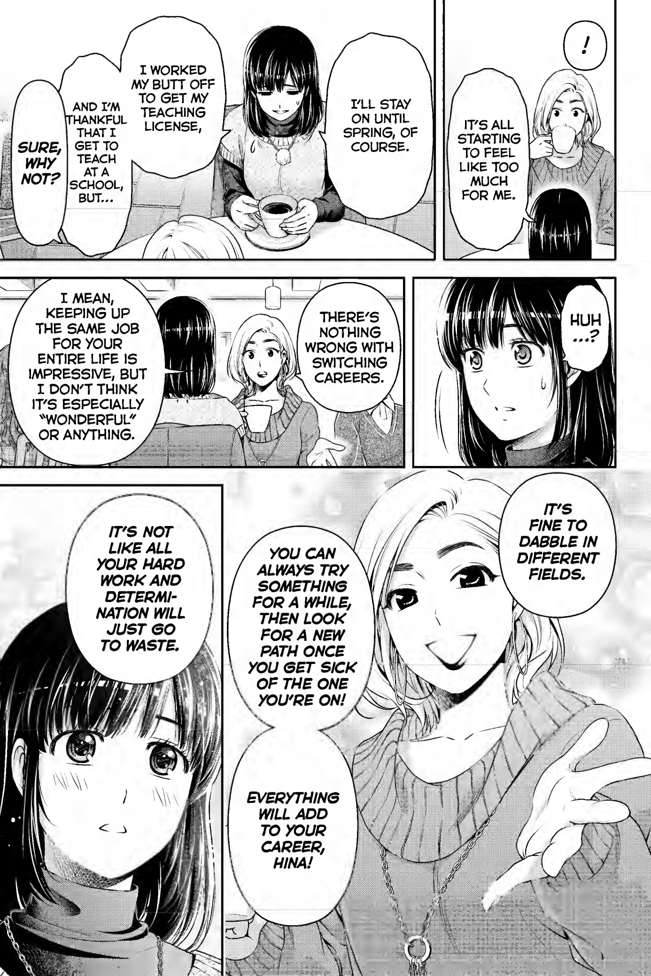

HMM.
HEY.
WHERE DO YOU USUALLY GET LUNCH?
TONKATSU UMAYOSHI
かつ定食
とんかつ
定食
HERE YOU GO!
TWO LARGE CUTLET BOWLS WITH SAUCE!
ENJOY!
どどんっ
DA-DOOM
THIS IS, UHH ...
MORE LIKE EXTRA-EXTRA-LARGE...
THIS HAS BEEN MY GO-TO RESTAURANT EVER SINCE I STARTED GOING TO PREP SCHOOL.
パキッ
SNAP
とん汁

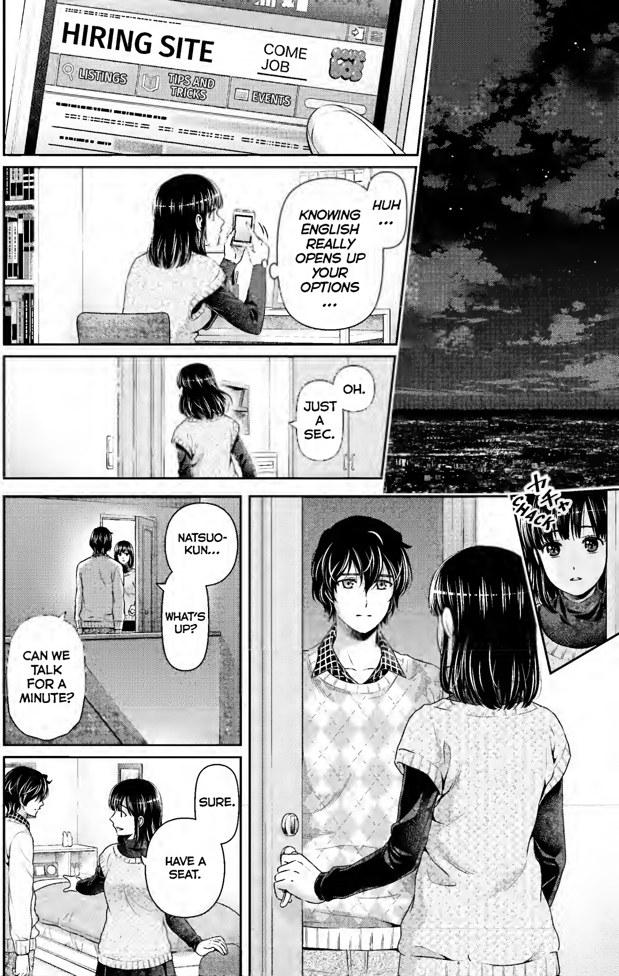

BUT, UHH...
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME WHEN I SAID I DON'T HAVE MUCH OF AN APPETITE TODAY?
NOM もっ
HUH?
YOU'LL FEEL LIKE EATING AS SOON AS YOU TAKE A BITE.
ROCKIN ROL
WHAT'S WITH THAT LOGIC?
もっ NOM
IT'S BEST TO EAT SOMETHING GOOD WHEN YOU'RE FEELING DOWN.
...
YOU'RE REALLY NICE, YOU KNOW THAT?
ROCKIN
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK ABOUT IT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO,
BUT WHAT HAPPENED?
WHAT...
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF SOMEONE YOU CARED ABOUT...
...GAVE UP ON THEIR DREAMS BECAUSE OF YOU?
HERE IT COMES MONOMONO PAROSI

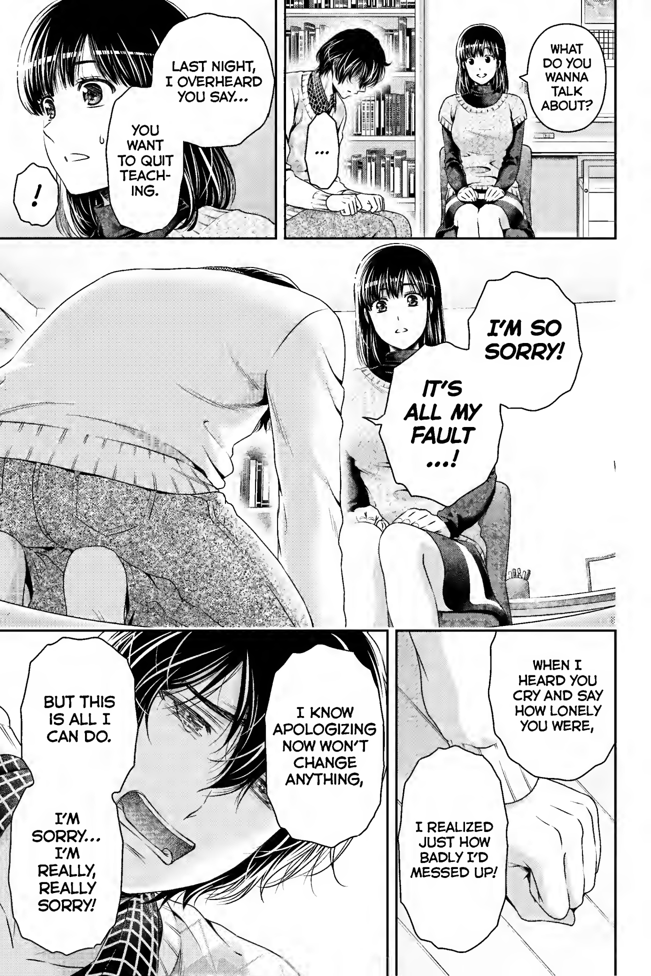

BECAUSE OF ME,
HUH?
I GUESS THAT DEPENDS ON JUST HOW MUCH OF IT WAS MY FAULT.
AT ANY RATE, I'D TRY TO STOP THEM.
BUT SHE'LL BE FORCED BACK INTO A PAINFUL SITUATION IF I STOP HER!
ダン！BAM
...
S-SORRY...
ARE YOU EVEN SURE IT'S REALLY YOUR FAULT?
PROBABLY...
PROBABLY?
NO, DEFINITELY.
LISTEN...
DID YOU FORGET ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN ME AND GENTA?
I LET BITTERNESS EAT AWAY AT ME FOR YEARS BECAUSE I COULDN'T SAY ANYTHING BACK WHEN I HEARD HIM BADMOUTH ME.
THAT IS, UNTIL YOU SNAPPED AT HIM FOR ME.
IN THE END, HARD FEELINGS DON'T GO AWAY UNTIL YOU GET EVERYTHING OFF YOUR CHEST AND HEAR WHAT THE OTHER PERSON HAS TO SAY.

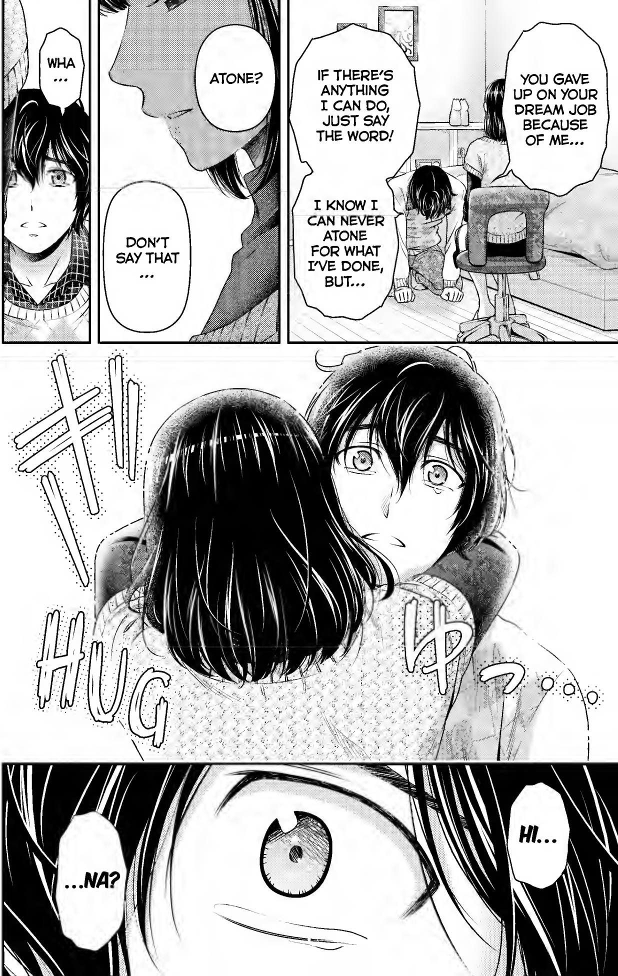

YOU DON'T WANT TO SUFFER FOR YEARS LIKE I DID, DO YOU?
YOU'RE SOMEONE WHO CAN PULL PEOPLE BACK ON THEIR FEET.
YOU SHOULD ALREADY KNOW WHAT IT IS YOU WANT TO DO.
MAKI!
OVER HERE!
SORRY I'M LATE!
I ALWAYS LAZE AROUND THE HOUSE WHENEVER I HAVE A DAY OFF.

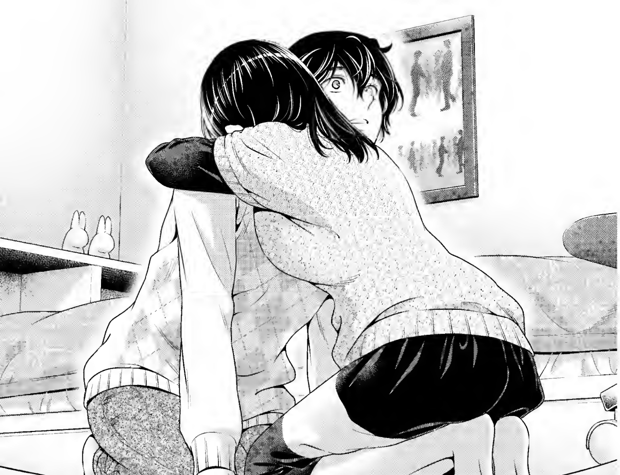

I KNOW HOW THAT IS.
I WAS SO GLAD YOU CALLED.
I WANTED TO SEE YOU, TOO.
OH!
EXCUSE ME. ONE CAFÉ MOCHA, PLEASE.
BUT YOU KNOW,
I'M SURPRISED YOU FELT LIKE COMING HOME.
ISN'T NATSUO-KUN AT THE HOUSE?
YEAH.
HE LOOKED...
...PRETTY TAKEN ABACK WHEN HE SAW ME.
WELL, A LOT HAPPENED, AFTER ALL.
YOU'LL BOTH JUST HAVE TO GET USED TO IT ONE VISIT AT A TIME.
ACTUALLY,
I'M...
...THINKING ABOUT GETTING OUT OF TEACHING.


!
IT'S ALL STARTING TO FEEL LIKE TOO MUCH FOR ME.
I'LL STAY ON UNTIL SPRING, OF COURSE.
I WORKED MY BUTT OFF TO GET MY TEACHING LICENSE,
AND I'M THANKFUL THAT I GET TO TEACH AT A SCHOOL, BUT...
SURE, WHY NOT?
HUH ...?
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH SWITCHING CAREERS.
I MEAN, KEEPING UP THE SAME JOB FOR YOUR ENTIRE LIFE IS IMPRESSIVE, BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S ESPECIALLY "WONDERFUL" OR ANYTHING.
IT'S FINE TO DABBLE IN DIFFERENT FIELDS.
YOU CAN ALWAYS TRY SOMETHING FOR A WHILE, THEN LOOK FOR A NEW PATH ONCE YOU GET SICK OF THE ONE YOU'RE ON!
IT'S NOT LIKE ALL YOUR HARD WORK AND DETERMINATION WILL JUST GO TO WASTE.
EVERYTHING WILL ADD TO YOUR CAREER, HINA!

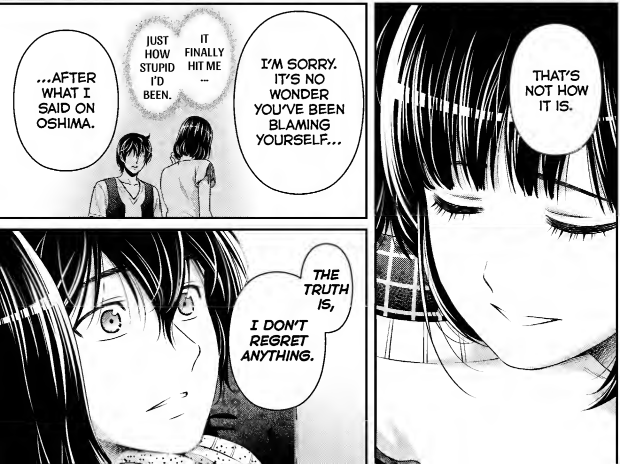

HIRING SITE
COME JOB
LISTINGS
TIPS AND TRICKS
EVENTS
HUH...
KNOWING ENGLISH REALLY OPENS UP YOUR OPTIONS...
OH.
JUST A SEC.
CHACK
NATSUO-KUN...
WHAT'S UP?
CAN WE TALK FOR A MINUTE?
SURE.
HAVE A SEAT.

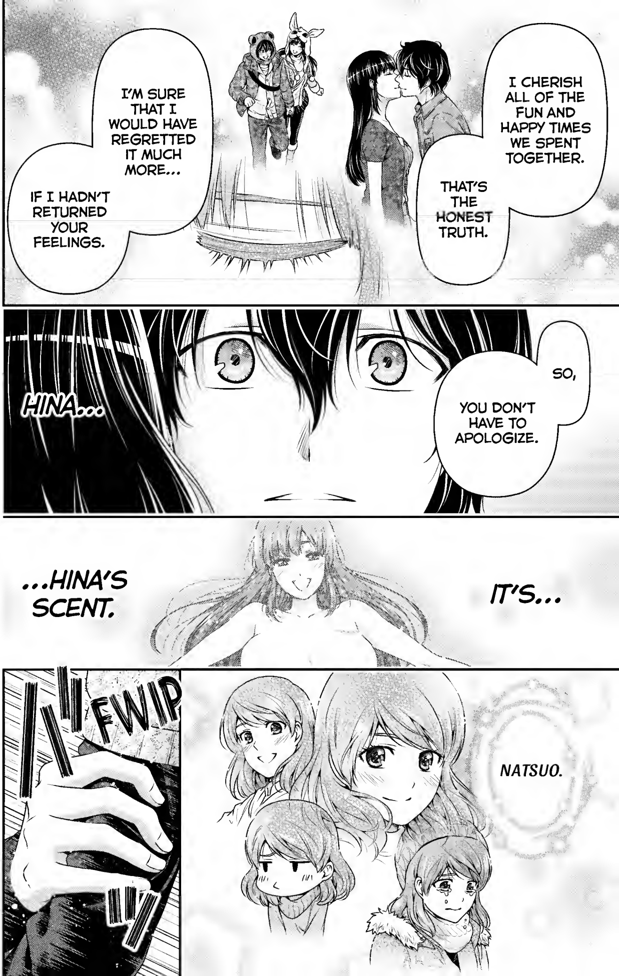

WHAT DO YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT?
...
LAST NIGHT, I OVERHEARD YOU SAY...
YOU WANT TO QUIT TEACHING.
!
I'M SO SORRY!
IT'S ALL MY FAULT ...!
WHEN I HEARD YOU CRY AND SAY HOW LONELY YOU WERE,
I REALIZED JUST HOW BADLY I'D MESSED UP!
I KNOW APOLOGIZING NOW WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING,
BUT THIS IS ALL I CAN DO.
I'M SORRY... I'M REALLY, REALLY SORRY!

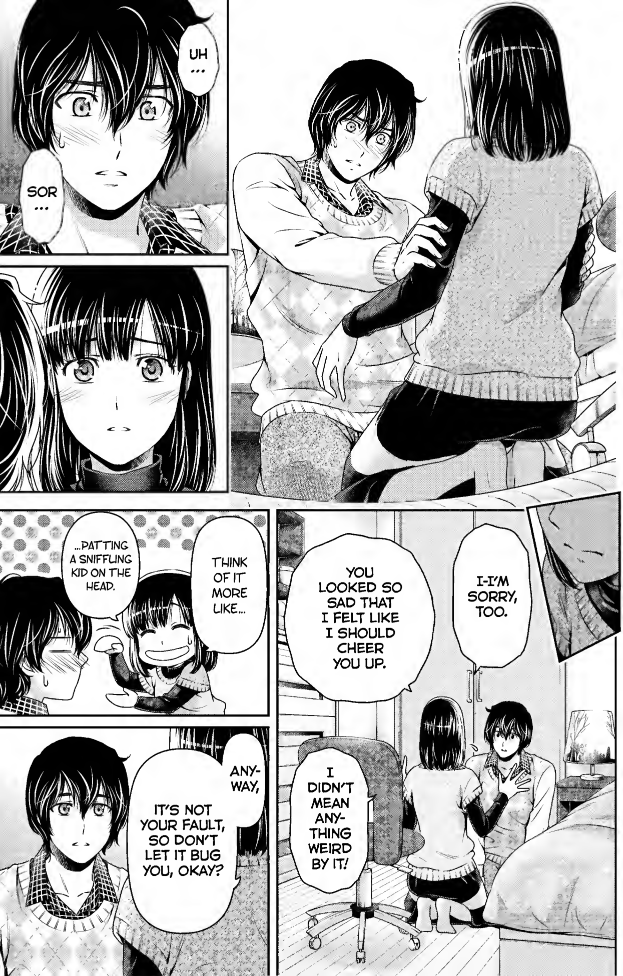

YOU GAVE UP ON YOUR DREAM JOB BECAUSE OF ME...
IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO, JUST SAY THE WORD!
I KNOW I CAN NEVER ATONE FOR WHAT I'VE DONE, BUT...
ATONE?
DON'T SAY THAT ...
WHA ...
ギュ
ゆっ…
HUG
HI...
...NA?

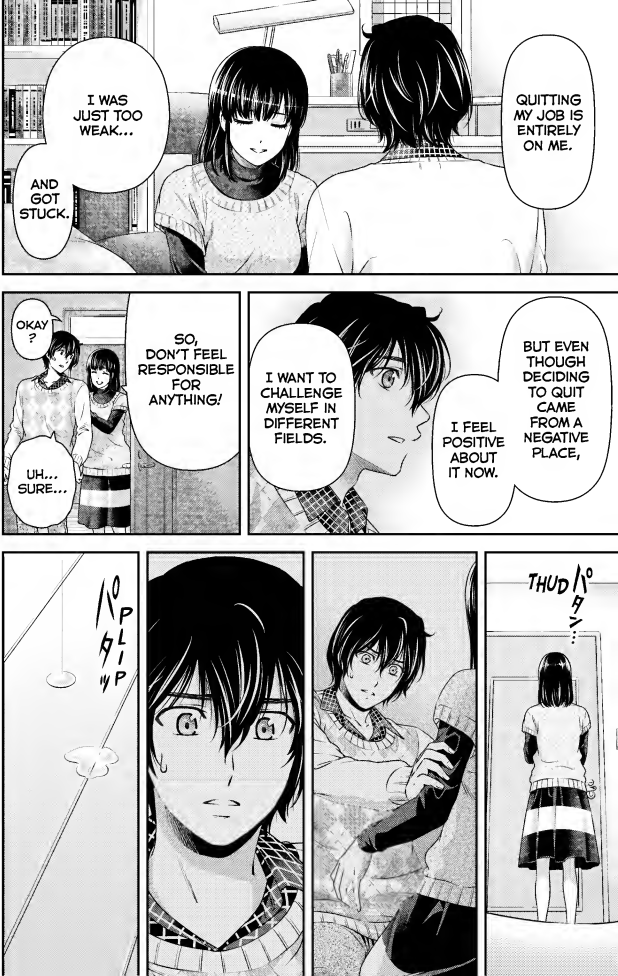


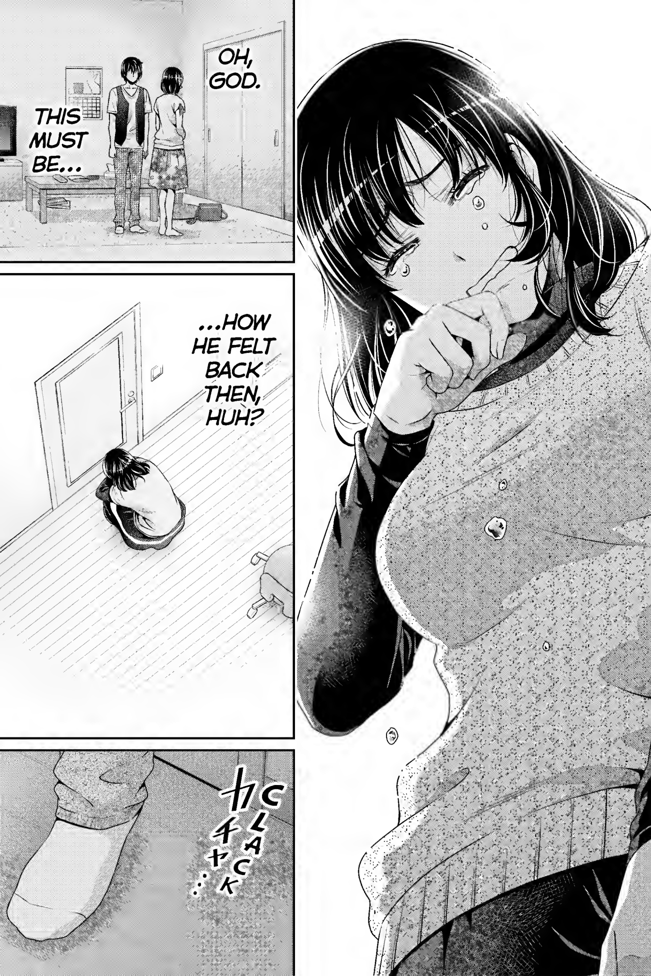
CHAPTER 133: THE MEANING BEHIND THE EMBRACE

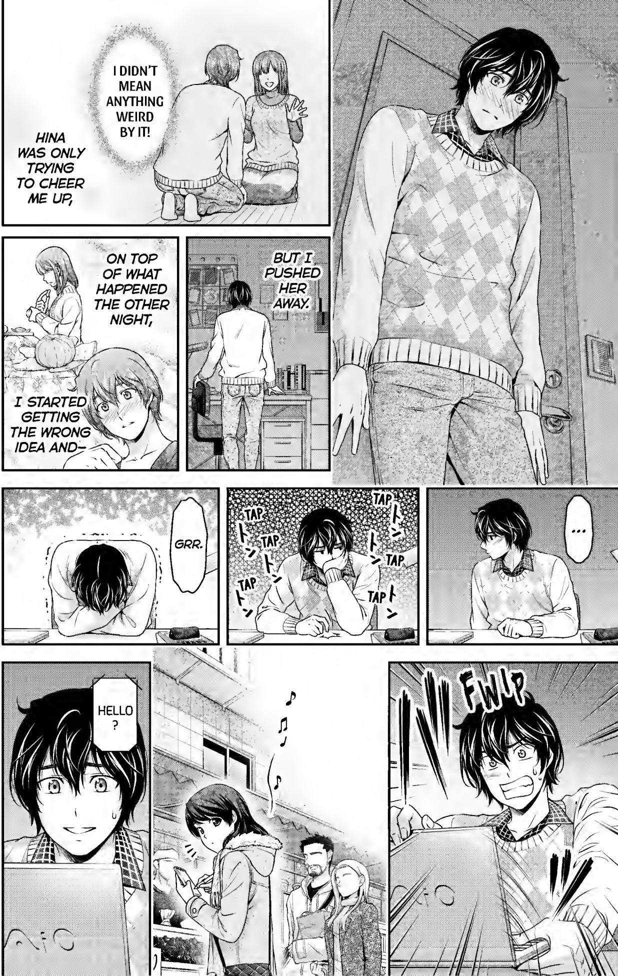

I'M SORRY. IT'S NO WONDER YOU'VE BEEN BLAMING YOURSELF...
IT FINALLY HIT ME...
JUST HOW STUPID I'D BEEN.
...AFTER WHAT I SAID ON OSHIMA.
THAT'S NOT HOW IT IS.
THE TRUTH IS,
I DON'T REGRET ANYTHING.

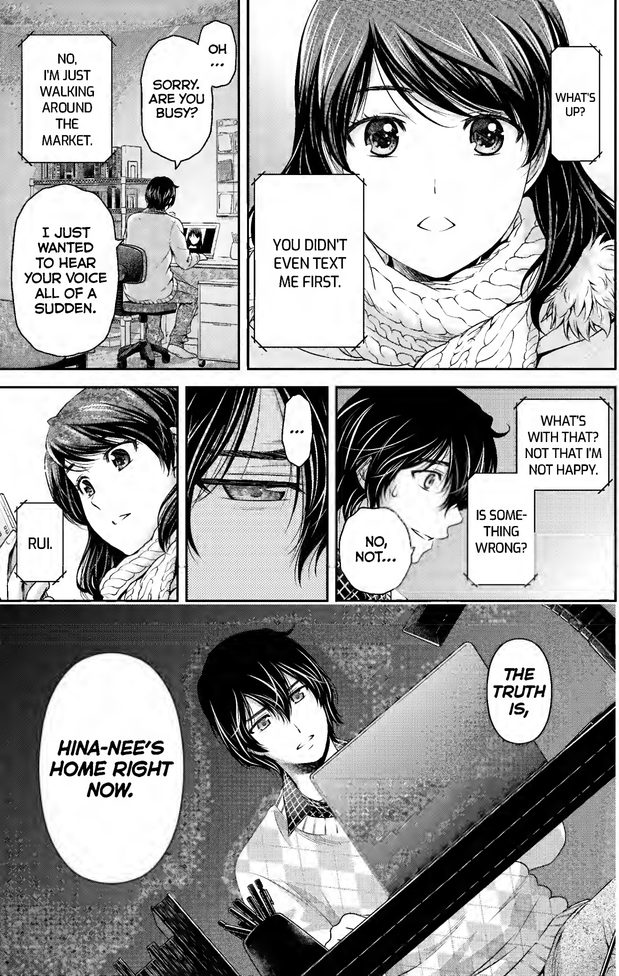

I CHERISH ALL OF THE FUN AND HAPPY TIMES WE SPENT TOGETHER.
THAT'S THE HONEST TRUTH.
I'M SURE THAT I WOULD HAVE REGRETTED IT MUCH MORE...
IF I HADN'T RETURNED YOUR FEELINGS.
SO,
YOU DON'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE.
HINA...
IT'S...
...HINA'S SCENT.
NATSUO.
FWIP

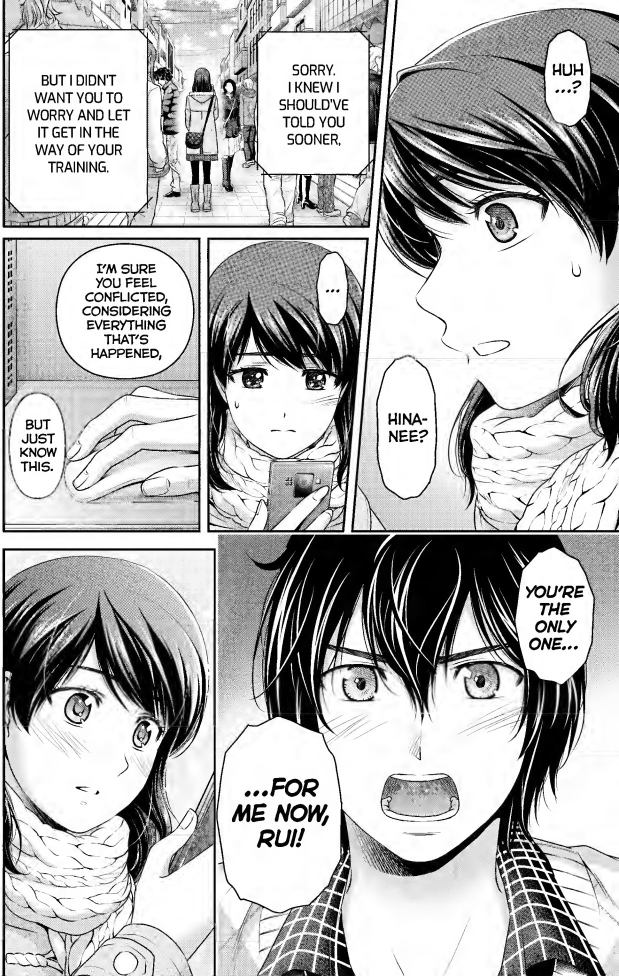

UH ...
SOR ...
I-I'M SORRY, TOO.
YOU LOOKED SO SAD THAT I FELT LIKE I SHOULD CHEER YOU UP.
I DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING WEIRD BY IT!
THINK OF IT MORE LIKE...
...PATTING A SNIFFLING KID ON THE HEAD.
ANYWAY,
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, SO DON'T LET IT BUG YOU, OKAY?

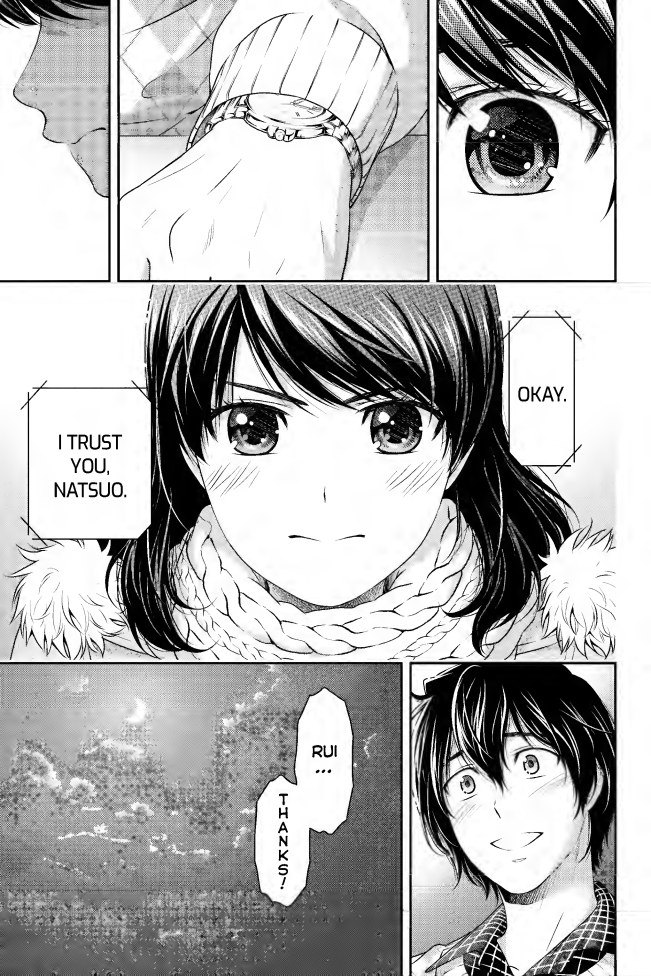

QUITTING MY JOB IS ENTIRELY ON ME.
I WAS JUST TOO WEAK...
AND GOT STUCK.
BUT EVEN THOUGH DECIDING TO QUIT CAME FROM A NEGATIVE PLACE,
I FEEL POSITIVE ABOUT IT NOW.
I WANT TO CHALLENGE MYSELF IN DIFFERENT FIELDS.
SO, DON'T FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR ANYTHING!
OKAY?
UH... SURE...
THUD パタン…
パタッ PLIP

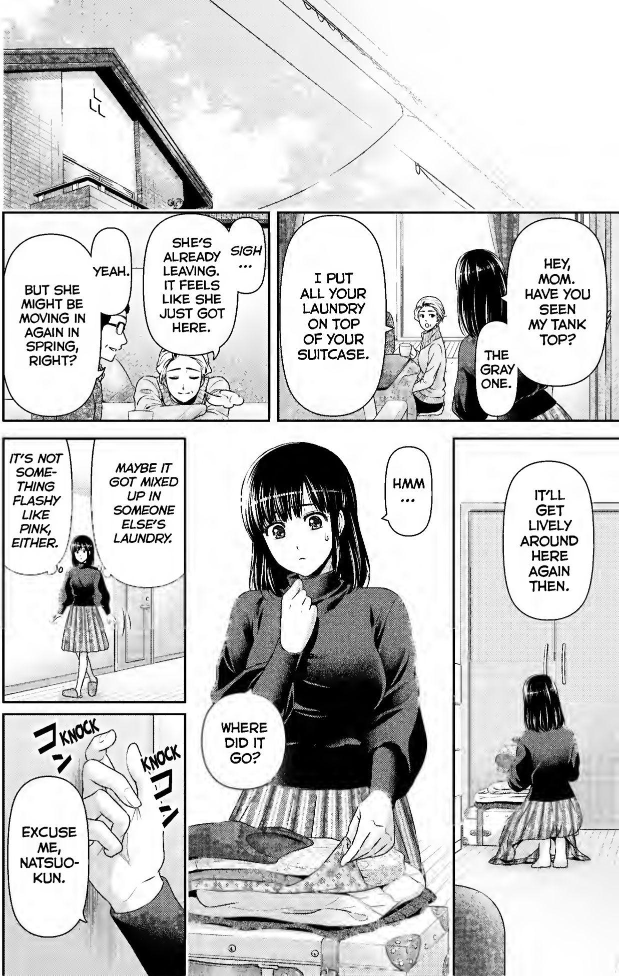

OH, GOD.
THIS MUST BE...
...HOW HE FELT BACK THEN, HUH?
カチャ…
CLACK

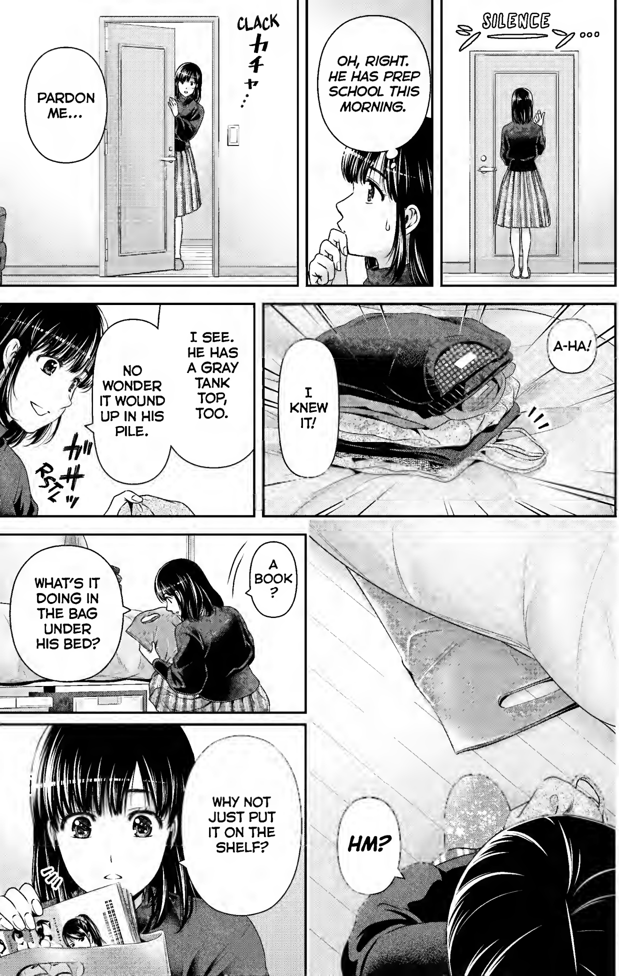

I DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING WEIRD BY IT!
HINA WAS ONLY TRYING TO CHEER ME UP,
BUT I PUSHED HER AWAY.
ON TOP OF WHAT HAPPENED THE OTHER NIGHT,
I STARTED GETTING THE WRONG IDEA AND—
...
TAP トン TAP トン TAP トン TAP トン TAP トン TAP トン
GRR.
FWIP
♪ ♫ ♪
HELLO?

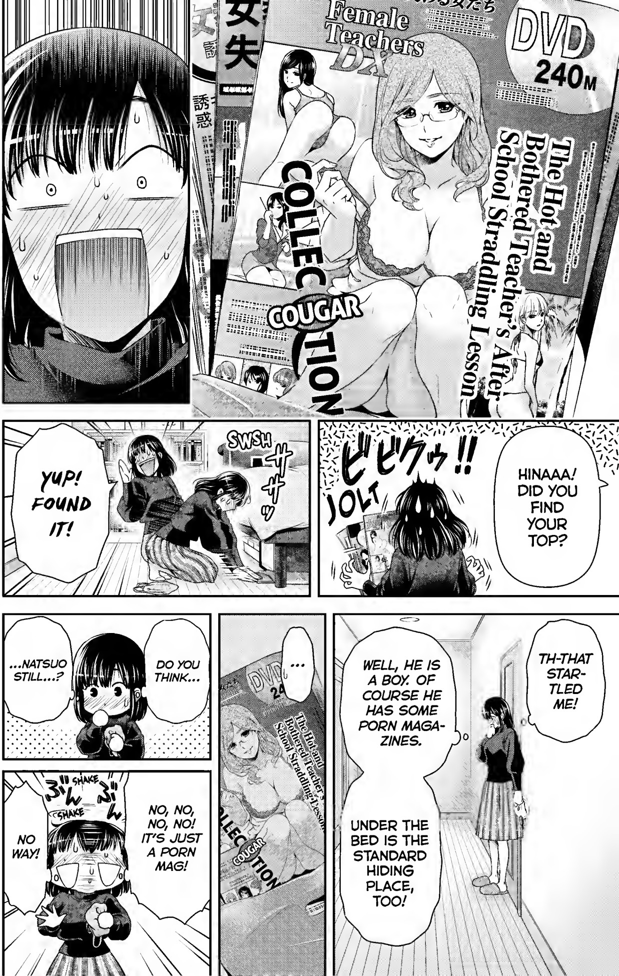

WHAT'S UP?
YOU DIDN'T EVEN TEXT ME FIRST.
OH ...
SORRY. ARE YOU BUSY?
NO, I'M JUST WALKING AROUND THE MARKET.
I JUST WANTED TO HEAR YOUR VOICE ALL OF A SUDDEN.
WHAT'S WITH THAT? NOT THAT I'M NOT HAPPY.
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
NO, NOT...
...
RUI.
THE TRUTH IS,
HINA-NEE'S HOME RIGHT NOW.


HUH ...?
HINA-NEE?
SORRY. I KNEW I SHOULD'VE TOLD YOU SOONER,
BUT I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO WORRY AND LET IT GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR TRAINING.
...
I'M SURE YOU FEEL CONFLICTED, CONSIDERING EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED,
BUT JUST KNOW THIS.
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE...
...FOR ME NOW, RUI!

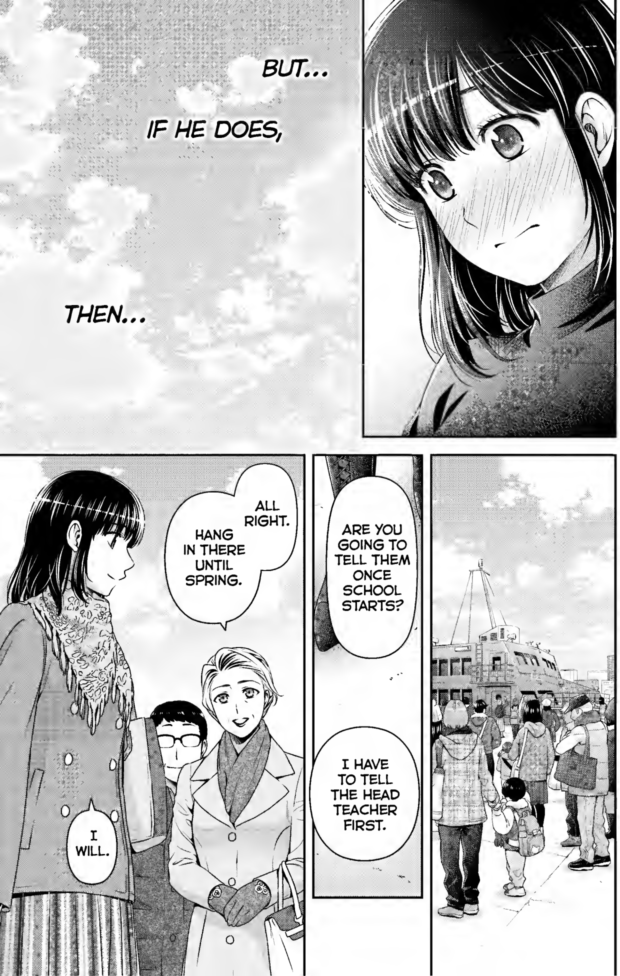

OKAY.
I TRUST YOU, NATSUO.
RUI...
THANKS!

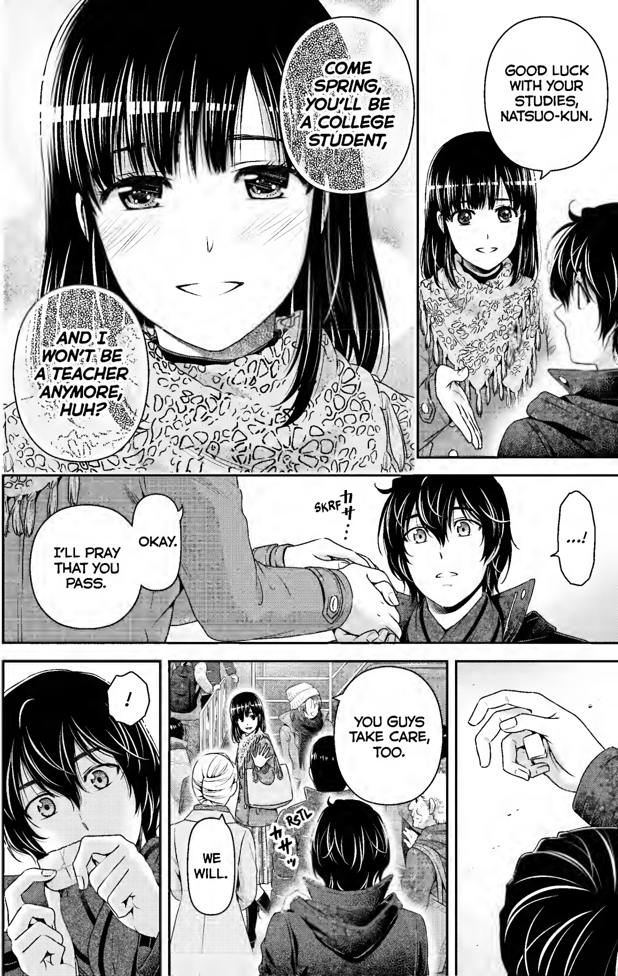

HEY, MOM. HAVE YOU SEEN MY TANK TOP?
THE GRAY ONE.
I PUT ALL YOUR LAUNDRY ON TOP OF YOUR SUITCASE.
SIGH ...
SHE'S ALREADY LEAVING. IT FEELS LIKE SHE JUST GOT HERE.
YEAH.
BUT SHE MIGHT BE MOVING IN AGAIN IN SPRING, RIGHT?
IT'LL GET LIVELY AROUND HERE AGAIN THEN.
HMM ...
WHERE DID IT GO?
MAYBE IT GOT MIXED UP IN SOMEONE ELSE'S LAUNDRY.
IT'S NOT SOMETHING FLASHY LIKE PINK, EITHER.
コン KNOCK
コン KNOCK
EXCUSE ME, NATSUO-KUN.

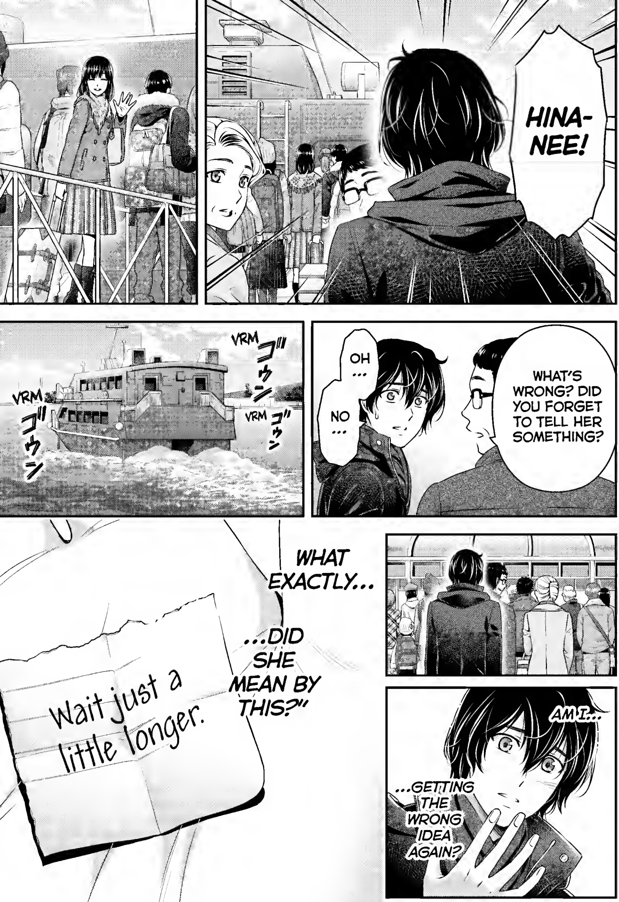

SILENCE
ooo
OH, RIGHT. HE HAS PREP SCHOOL THIS MORNING.
CLACK
カチャ…
PARDON ME…
A-HA!
I KNEW IT!
I SEE. HE HAS A GRAY TANK TOP, TOO.
NO WONDER IT WOUND UP IN HIS PILE.
ガサッ
RSTL
HM?
A BOOK?
WHAT'S IT DOING IN THE BAG UNDER HIS BED?
WHY NOT JUST PUT IT ON THE SHELF?

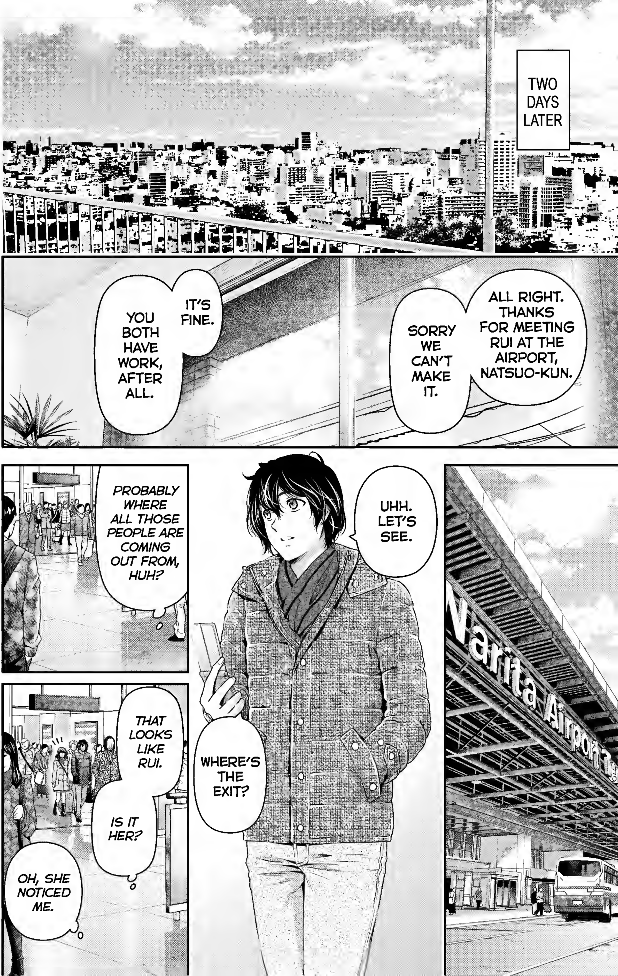


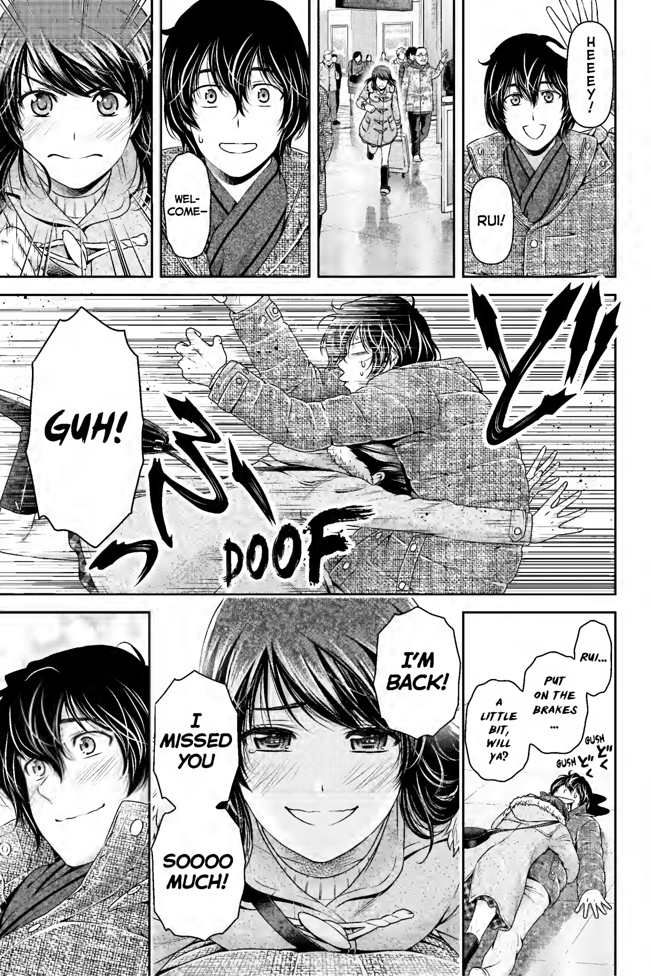
DVD 240M
Female Teachers DX
The Hot and Bothered Teacher's After School Straddling Lesson
COUGAR COLLECTION
女失
誘惑
ビビクゥ!!
JOLT
HINAAA! DID YOU FIND YOUR TOP?
SWSH
サササッ
YUP! FOUND IT!
TH-THAT STARTLED ME!
WELL, HE IS A BOY. OF COURSE HE HAS SOME PORN MAGAZINES.
UNDER THE BED IS THE STANDARD HIDING PLACE, TOO!
...
DVD 24
The Hot and Bothered Teacher's School Straddling Lesson
COUGAR COLLECTION
DO YOU THINK...
...NATSUO STILL...?
ぶんぶん
SHAKE
SHAKE
NO, NO, NO, NO! IT'S JUST A PORN MAG!
NO WAY!

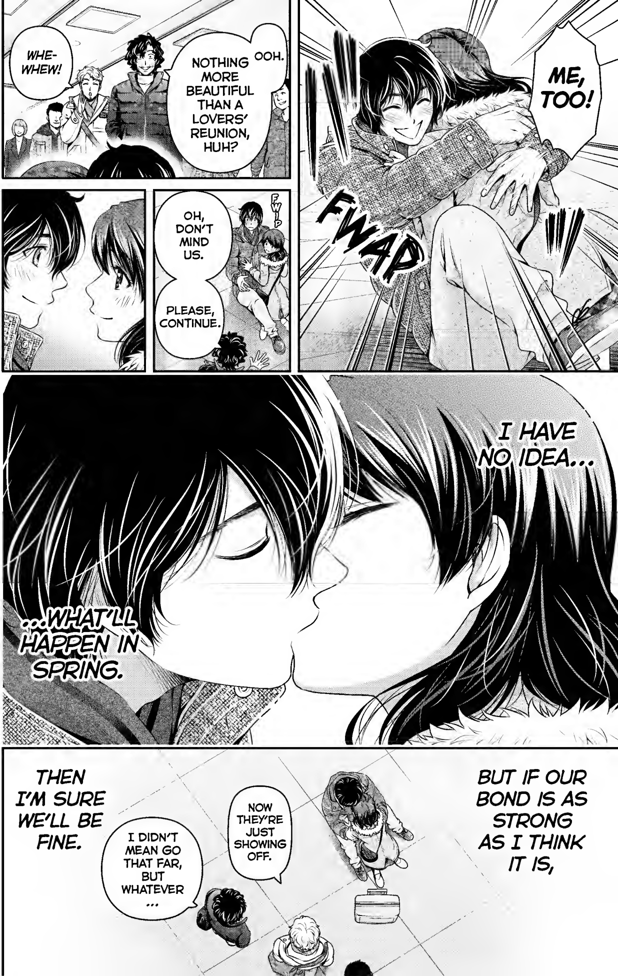

BUT...
IF HE DOES,
THEN...
ARE YOU GOING TO TELL THEM ONCE SCHOOL STARTS?
I HAVE TO TELL THE HEAD TEACHER FIRST.
ALL RIGHT. HANG IN THERE UNTIL SPRING.
I WILL.


GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR STUDIES, NATSUO-KUN.
COME SPRING, YOU'LL BE A COLLEGE STUDENT,
AND I WON'T BE A TEACHER ANYMORE, HUH?
...!
SKRF カサ...
OKAY.
I'LL PRAY THAT YOU PASS.
YOU GUYS TAKE CARE, TOO.
RSTL カサッ
WE WILL.
!


HINA-NEE!
WHAT'S WRONG? DID YOU FORGET TO TELL HER SOMETHING?
OH...
NO...
VRM
ゴウン
VRM
ゴウン
VRM
ゴウン
WHAT EXACTLY...
...DID SHE MEAN BY THIS?"
Wait just a little longer.
AM I...
...GETTING THE WRONG IDEA AGAIN?

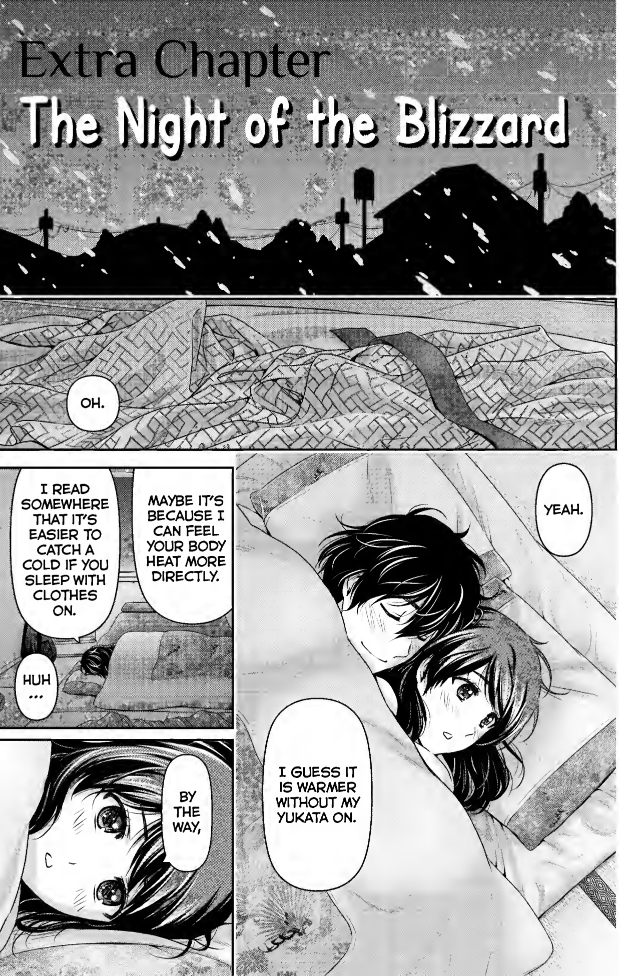

TWO DAYS LATER
ALL RIGHT. THANKS FOR MEETING RUI AT THE AIRPORT, NATSUO-KUN.
SORRY WE CAN'T MAKE IT.
IT'S FINE.
YOU BOTH HAVE WORK, AFTER ALL.
Narita Airport T
UHH. LET'S SEE.
WHERE'S THE EXIT?
PROBABLY WHERE ALL THOSE PEOPLE ARE COMING OUT FROM, HUH?
THAT LOOKS LIKE RUI.
IS IT HER?
OH, SHE NOTICED ME.

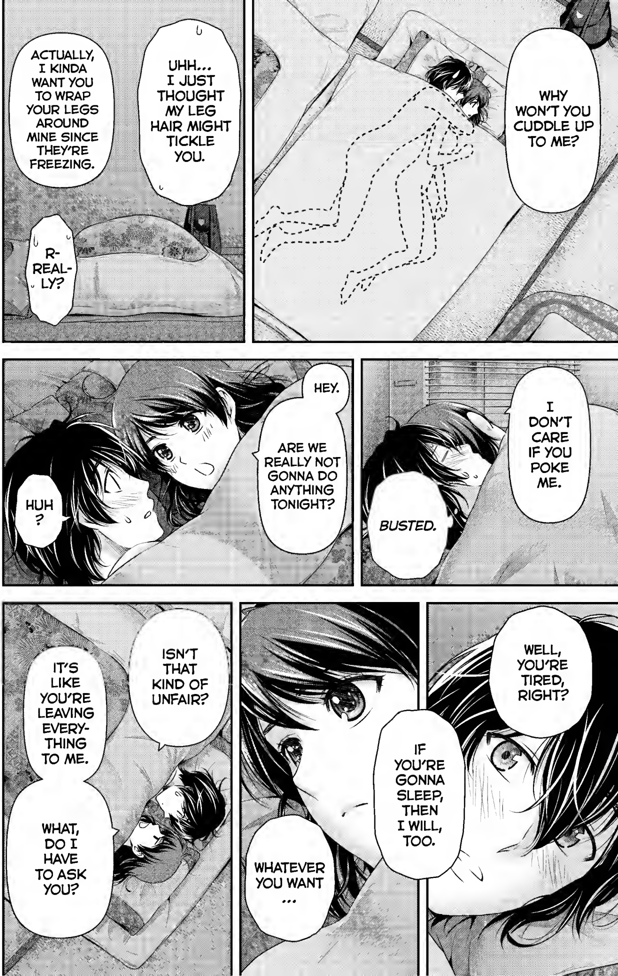

HEEEY!
RUI!
WEL-COME–
GUH!
DOOF
RUI... PUT ON THE BRAKES ... A LITTLE BIT, WILL YA?
GUSH
GUSH
I'M BACK!
I MISSED YOU SOOOO MUCH!

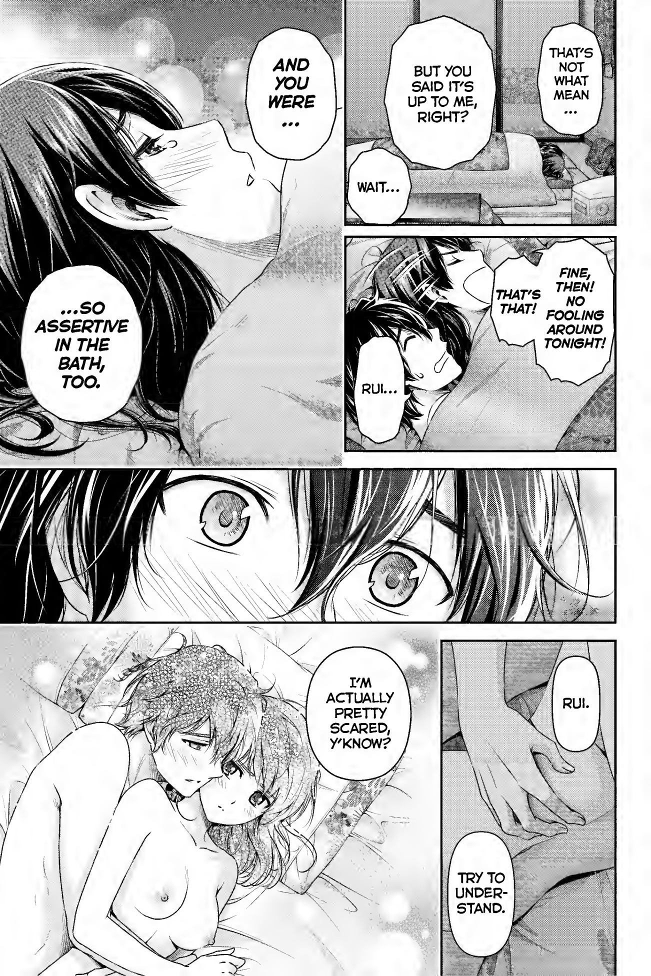

ME, TOO!
FWAP
OOH.
NOTHING MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN A LOVERS' REUNION, HUH?
WHE-WHEW!
FWIP
OH, DON'T MIND US.
PLEASE, CONTINUE.
I HAVE NO IDEA...
...WHAT'LL HAPPEN IN SPRING.
BUT IF OUR BOND IS AS STRONG AS I THINK IT IS,
NOW THEY'RE JUST SHOWING OFF.
I DIDN'T MEAN GO THAT FAR, BUT WHATEVER...
THEN I'M SURE WE'LL BE FINE.

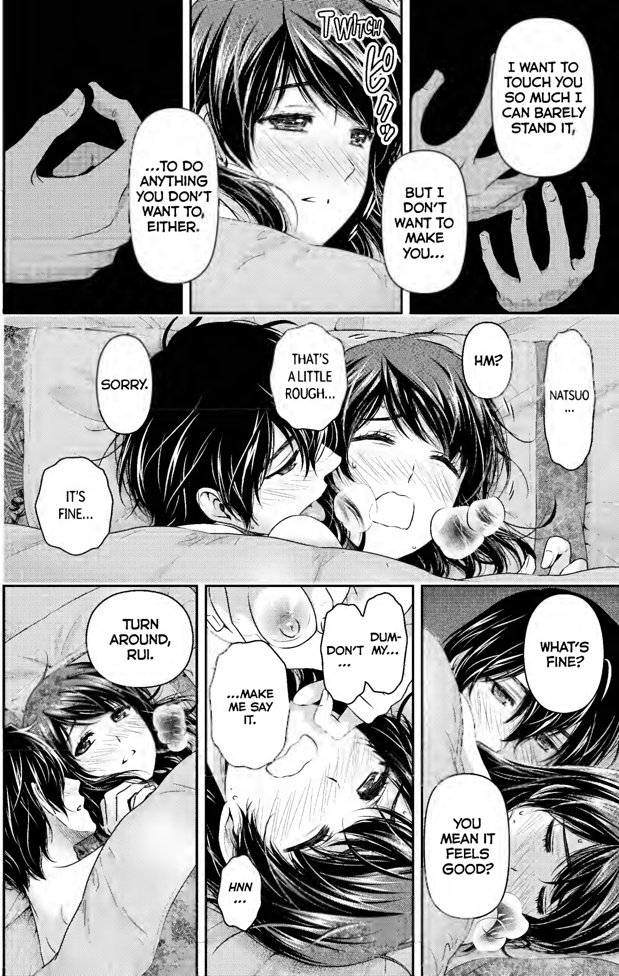
Extra Chapter

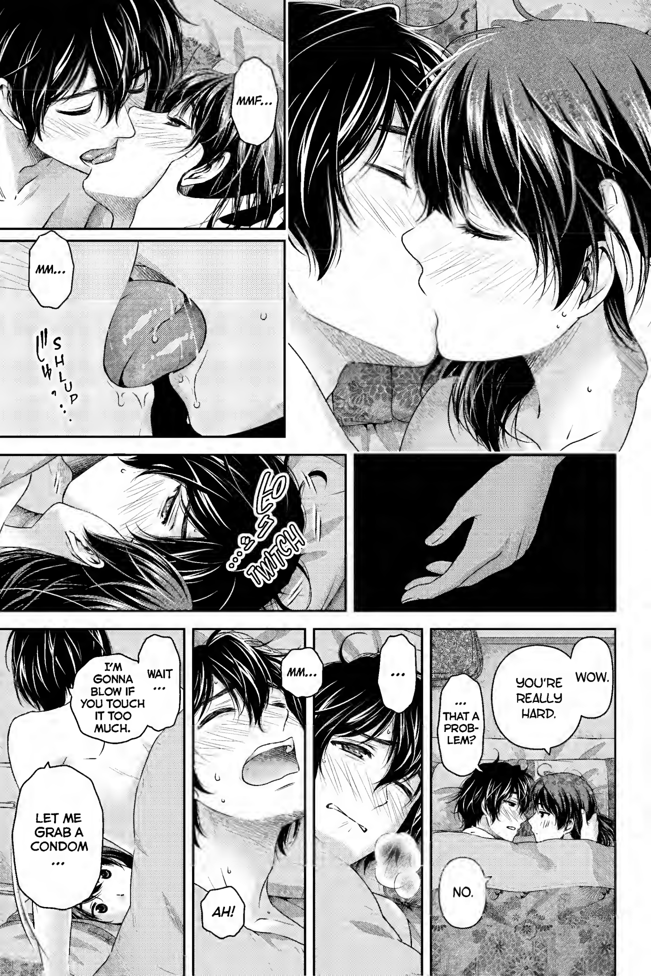
The Night of the Blizzard

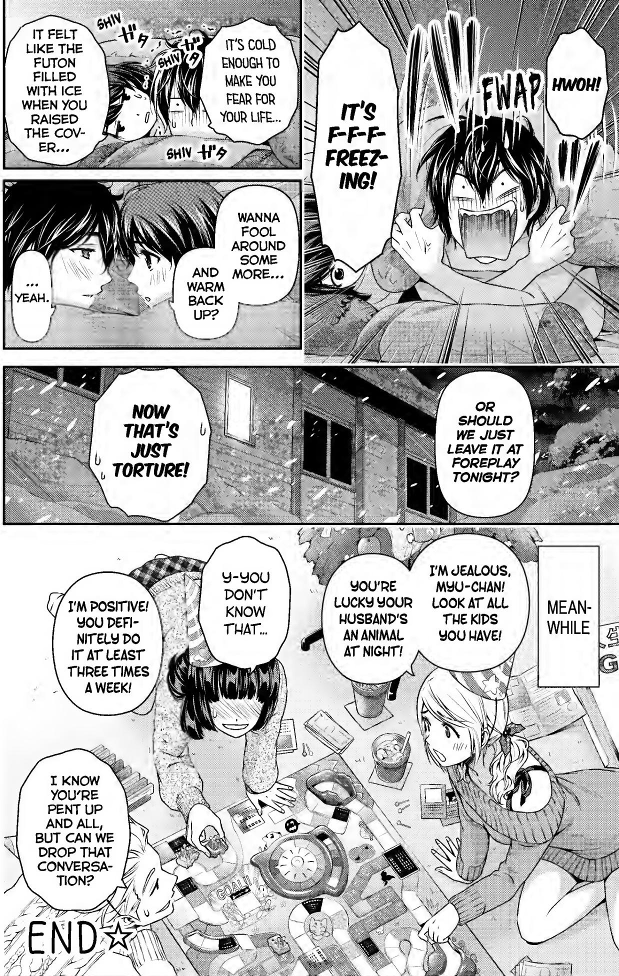

OH.
YEAH.
I GUESS IT IS WARMER WITHOUT MY YUKATA ON.
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I CAN FEEL YOUR BODY HEAT MORE DIRECTLY.
I READ SOMEWHERE THAT IT'S EASIER TO CATCH A COLD IF YOU SLEEP WITH CLOTHES ON.
HUH ...
BY THE WAY,


WHY WON'T YOU CUDDLE UP TO ME?
UHH... I JUST THOUGHT MY LEG HAIR MIGHT TICKLE YOU.
ACTUALLY, I KINDA WANT YOU TO WRAP YOUR LEGS AROUND MINE SINCE THEY'RE FREEZING.
R-REALLY?
I DON'T CARE IF YOU POKE ME.
BUSTED.
HEY.
ARE WE REALLY NOT GONNA DO ANYTHING TONIGHT?
HUH?
WELL, YOU'RE TIRED, RIGHT?
IF YOU'RE GONNA SLEEP, THEN I WILL, TOO.
WHATEVER YOU WANT ...
ISN'T THAT KIND OF UNFAIR?
IT'S LIKE YOU'RE LEAVING EVERYTHING TO ME.
WHAT, DO I HAVE TO ASK YOU?


THAT'S NOT WHAT MEAN ...
BUT YOU SAID IT'S UP TO ME, RIGHT?
WAIT...
AND YOU WERE ...
...SO ASSERTIVE IN THE BATH, TOO.
FINE, THEN! NO FOOLING AROUND TONIGHT!
THAT'S THAT!
RUI...
RUI.
TRY TO UNDER-STAND.
I'M ACTUALLY PRETTY SCARED, Y'KNOW?

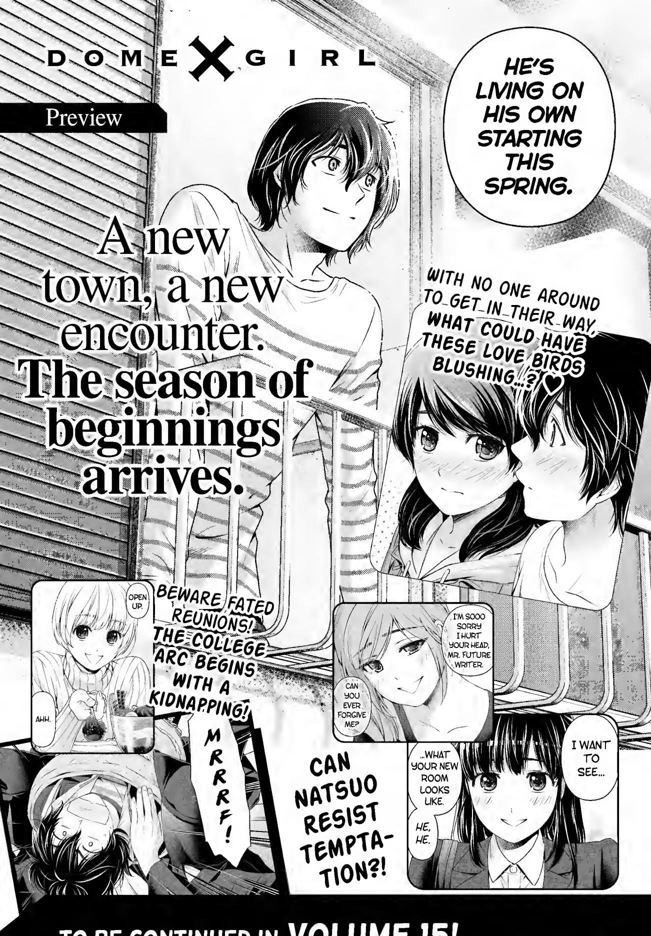

I WANT TO TOUCH YOU SO MUCH I CAN BARELY STAND IT,
BUT I DON'T WANT TO MAKE YOU...
TWITCH
ピクッ
...TO DO ANYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO, EITHER.
NATSUO...
HM?
THAT'S A LITTLE ROUGH...
SORRY.
IT'S FINE...
WHAT'S FINE?
YOU MEAN IT FEELS GOOD?
DUMMY...
DON'T...
...MAKE ME SAY IT.
HNN...
TURN AROUND, RUI.


MMF...
MM...
じゅ SHLUP...
ピク... TWITCH
WOW.
YOU'RE REALLY HARD.
... THAT A PROBLEM?
NO.
...
MM...
AH!
WAIT...
I'M GONNA BLOW IF YOU TOUCH IT TOO MUCH.
LET ME GRAB A CONDOM...


HWOH!
FWAP
IT'S F-F-F-FREEZING!
SHIV ガタ
SHIV ガタ
IT'S COLD ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU FEAR FOR YOUR LIFE...
IT FELT LIKE THE FUTON FILLED WITH ICE WHEN YOU RAISED THE COVER...
SHIV ガタ
WANNA FOOL AROUND SOME MORE...
AND WARM BACK UP?
... YEAH.
OR SHOULD WE JUST LEAVE IT AT FOREPLAY TONIGHT?
NOW THAT'S JUST TORTURE!
MEANWHILE
I'M JEALOUS, MYU-CHAN! LOOK AT ALL THE KIDS YOU HAVE!
YOU'RE LUCKY YOUR HUSBAND'S AN ANIMAL AT NIGHT!
Y-YOU DON'T KNOW THAT...
I'M POSITIVE! YOU DEFINITELY DO IT AT LEAST THREE TIMES A WEEK!
I KNOW YOU'RE PENT UP AND ALL, BUT CAN WE DROP THAT CONVERSATION?
GOAL!
END☆

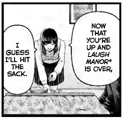
DOME X GIRL

Preview


HE'S LIVING ON HIS OWN STARTING THIS SPRING.
A new town, a new encounter. The season of beginnings arrives.
WITH NO ONE AROUND TO GET IN THEIR WAY, WHAT COULD HAVE THESE LOVE BIRDS BLUSHING...?♥
I'M SOOO SORRY I HURT YOUR HEAD, MR. FUTURE WRITER.
CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME?
BEWARE FATED REUNIONS! THE COLLEGE ARC BEGINS WITH A KIDNAPPING!
OPEN UP.
AHH.
I WANT TO SEE...
...WHAT YOUR NEW ROOM LOOKS LIKE.
HE, HE.
CAN NATSUO RESIST TEMPTATION?!
MRRRF!

TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 15!

TRANSLATION NOTES


NOW THAT YOU'RE UP AND *LAUGH MANOR** IS OVER,
I GUESS I'LL HIT THE SACK.

LAUGH MANOR, PAGE 117

Titled *Omoshiro-Sou e Irasshai!* in Japanese, this is a segment on the variety show *KuruKuru Ninety-Nine Hi-Tension TV,* it features up and coming comedic talent on the set of a fictional apartment known as Laugh Manor.

Domestic Girlfriend 14

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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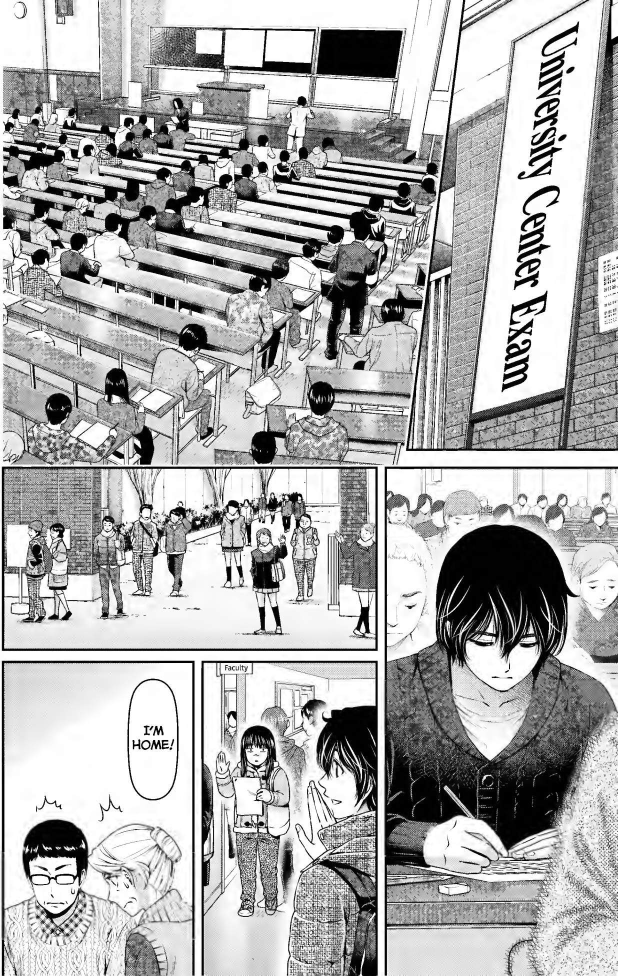
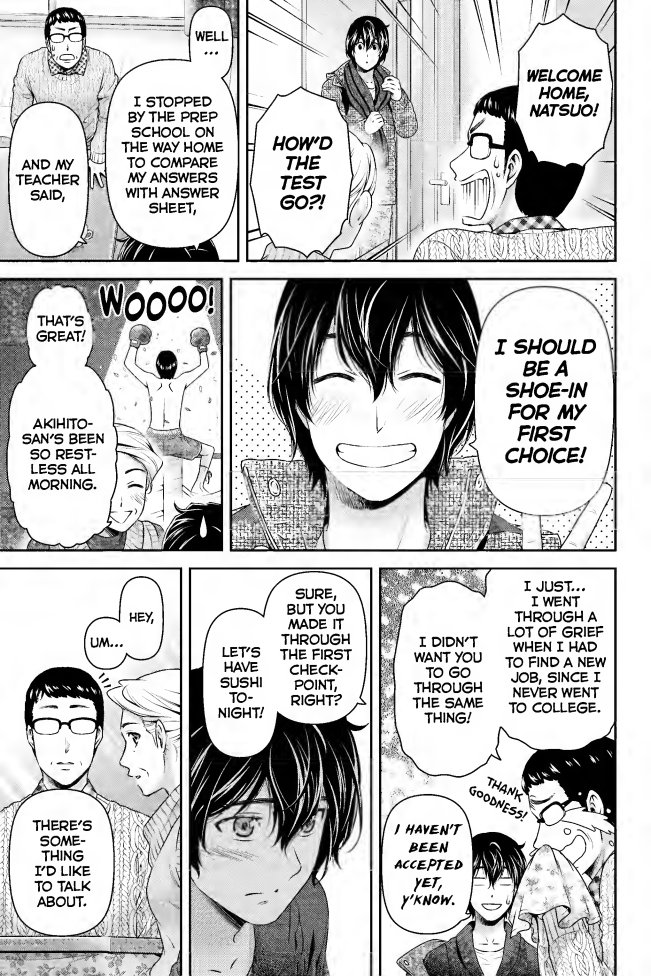
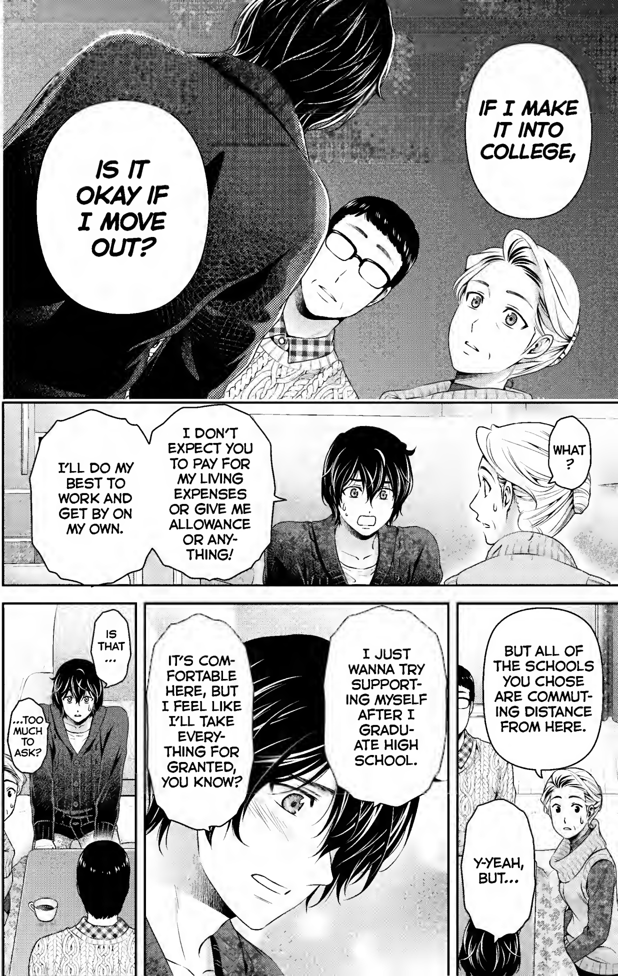
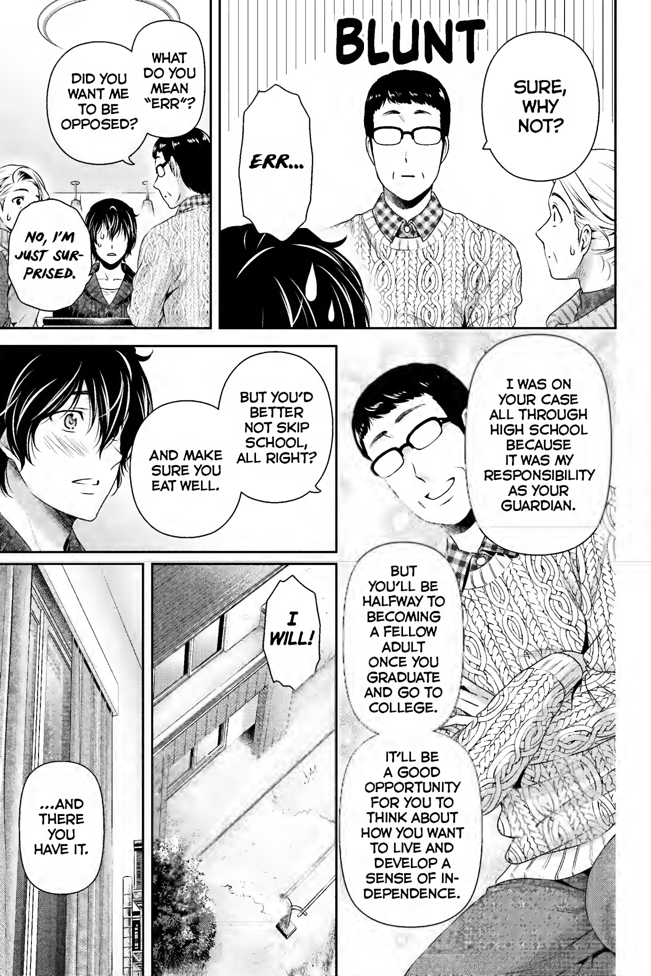
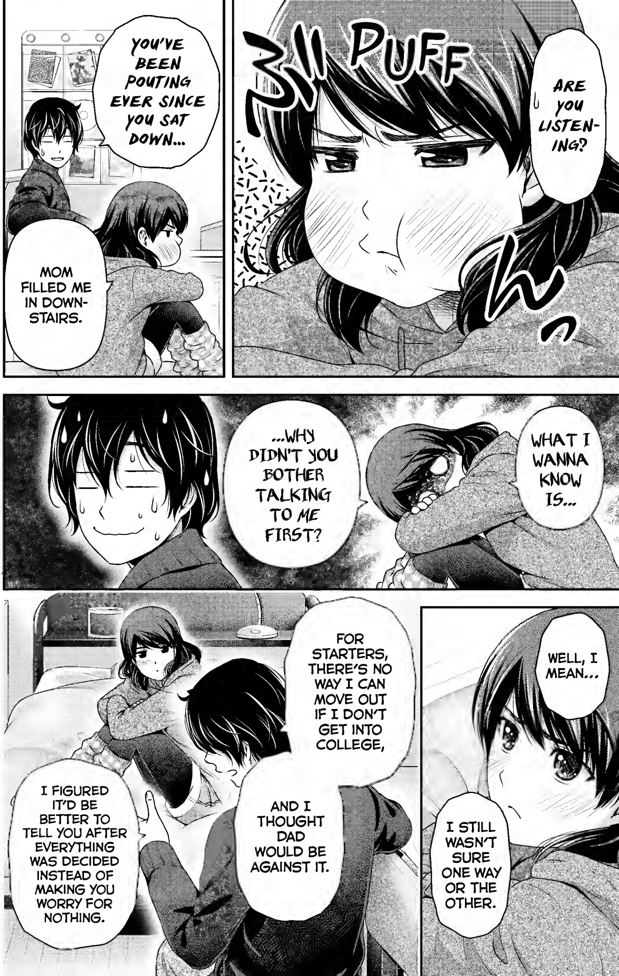
CHAPTER 134: FROM NOW ON

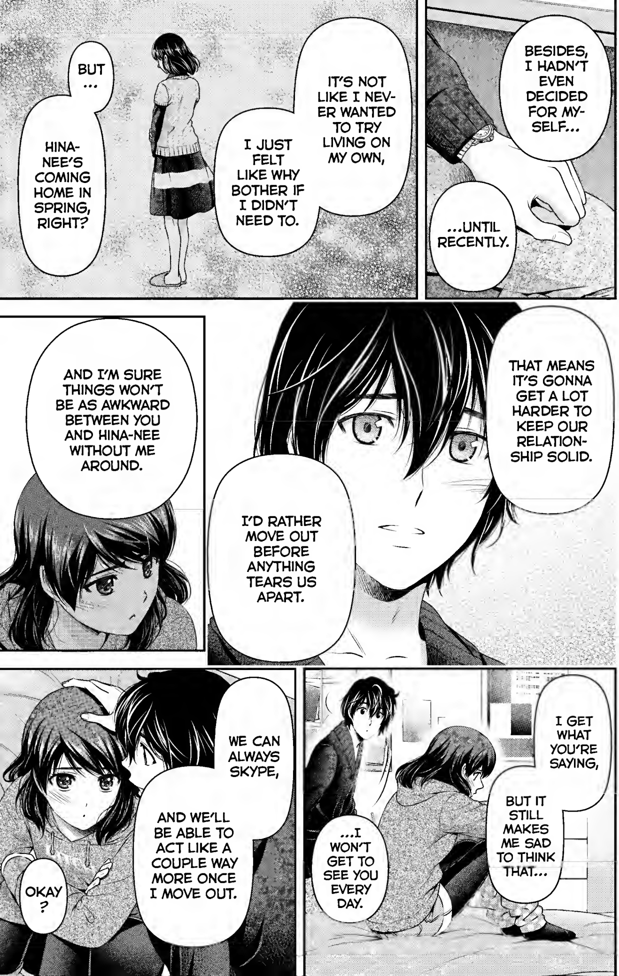

University Center Exam
Faculty
I'M HOME!

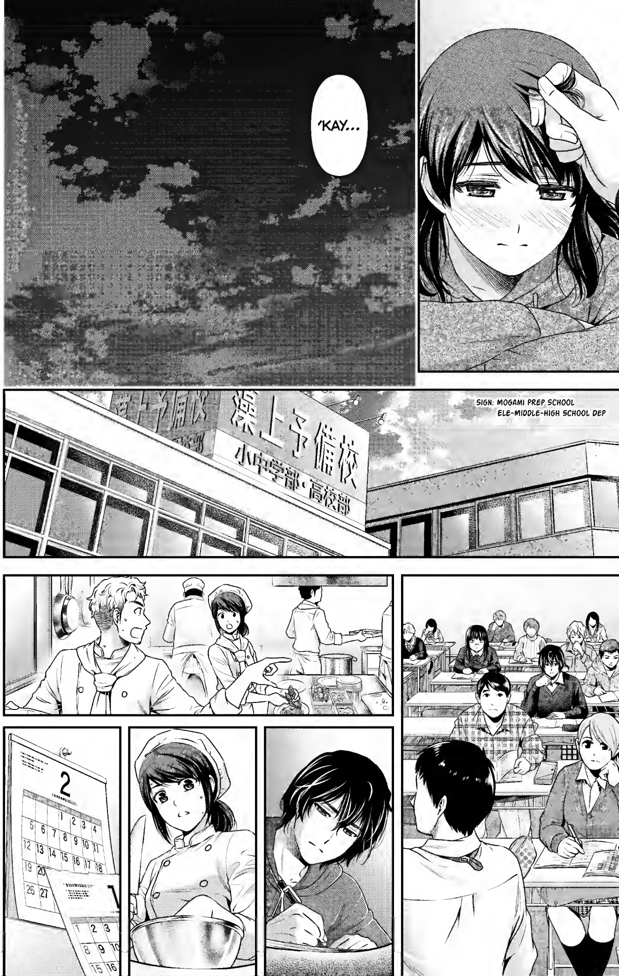

WELCOME HOME, NATSUO!
HOW'D THE TEST GO?!
WELL ...
I STOPPED BY THE PREP SCHOOL ON THE WAY HOME TO COMPARE MY ANSWERS WITH ANSWER SHEET,
AND MY TEACHER SAID,
I SHOULD BE A SHOE-IN FOR MY FIRST CHOICE!
WOOOO!
THAT'S GREAT!
AKIHITO-SAN'S BEEN SO RESTLESS ALL MORNING.
I JUST... I WENT THROUGH A LOT OF GRIEF WHEN I HAD TO FIND A NEW JOB, SINCE I NEVER WENT TO COLLEGE.
I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO GO THROUGH THE SAME THING!
THANK GOODNESS!
I HAVEN'T BEEN ACCEPTED YET, Y'KNOW.
SURE, BUT YOU MADE IT THROUGH THE FIRST CHECKPOINT, RIGHT?
LET'S HAVE SUSHI TONIGHT!
HEY,
UM...
THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT.

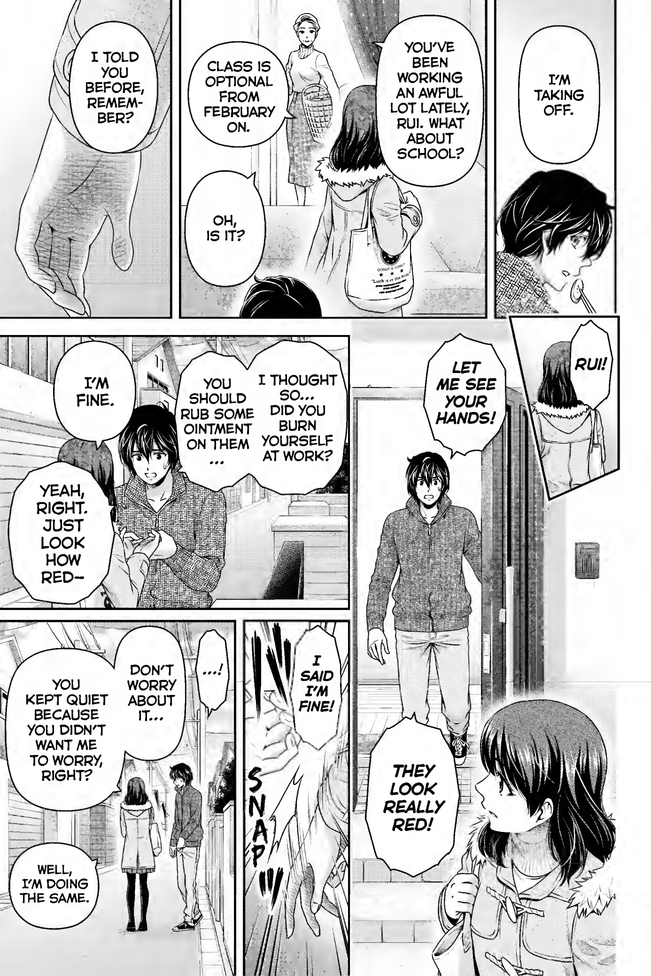

IF I MAKE IT INTO COLLEGE,
IS IT OKAY IF I MOVE OUT?
WHAT?
I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO PAY FOR MY LIVING EXPENSES OR GIVE ME ALLOWANCE OR ANYTHING!
I'LL DO MY BEST TO WORK AND GET BY ON MY OWN.
BUT ALL OF THE SCHOOLS YOU CHOSE ARE COMMUTING DISTANCE FROM HERE.
Y-YEAH, BUT...
I JUST WANNA TRY SUPPORTING MYSELF AFTER I GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL.
IT'S COMFORTABLE HERE, BUT I FEEL LIKE I'LL TAKE EVERYTHING FOR GRANTED, YOU KNOW?
IS THAT ...
...TOO MUCH TO ASK?

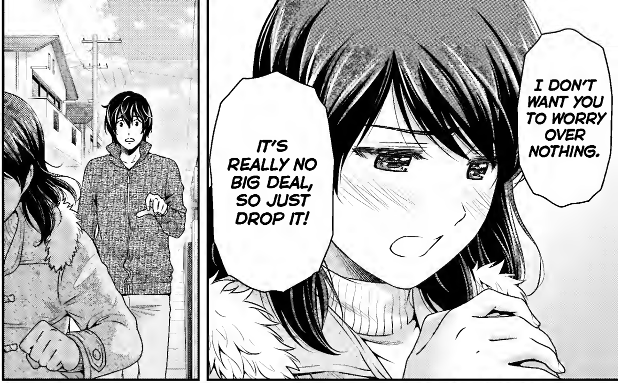

BLUNT
SURE, WHY NOT?
ERR...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "ERR"?
DID YOU WANT ME TO BE OPPOSED?
NO, I'M JUST SURPRISED.
I WAS ON YOUR CASE ALL THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL BECAUSE IT WAS MY RESPONSIBILITY AS YOUR GUARDIAN.
BUT YOU'LL BE HALFWAY TO BECOMING A FELLOW ADULT ONCE YOU GRADUATE AND GO TO COLLEGE.
IT'LL BE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO THINK ABOUT HOW YOU WANT TO LIVE AND DEVELOP A SENSE OF INDEPENDENCE.
BUT YOU'D BETTER NOT SKIP SCHOOL, ALL RIGHT?
AND MAKE SURE YOU EAT WELL.
I WILL!
...AND THERE YOU HAVE IT.

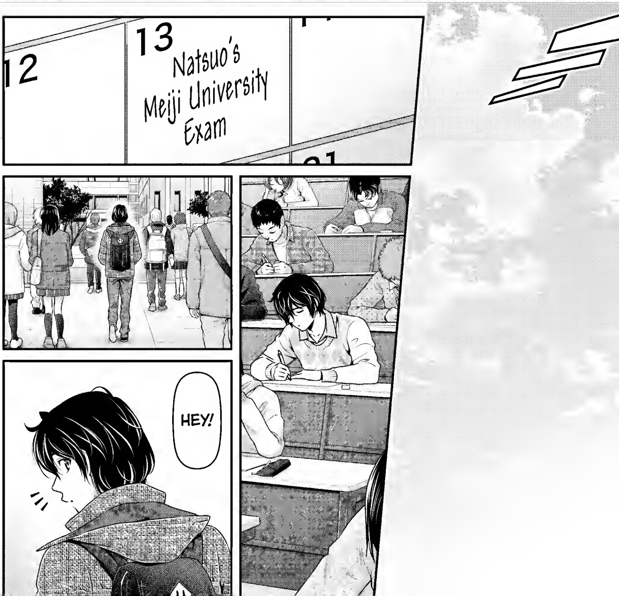

PUFF
ARE YOU LISTENING?
YOU'VE BEEN POUTING EVER SINCE YOU SAT DOWN...
MOM FILLED ME IN DOWNSTAIRS.
WHAT I WANNA KNOW IS...
...WHY DIDN'T YOU BOTHER TALKING TO *ME* FIRST?
WELL, I MEAN...
I STILL WASN'T SURE ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.
FOR STARTERS, THERE'S NO WAY I CAN MOVE OUT IF I DON'T GET INTO COLLEGE,
AND I THOUGHT DAD WOULD BE AGAINST IT.
I FIGURED IT'D BE BETTER TO TELL YOU AFTER EVERYTHING WAS DECIDED INSTEAD OF MAKING YOU WORRY FOR NOTHING.

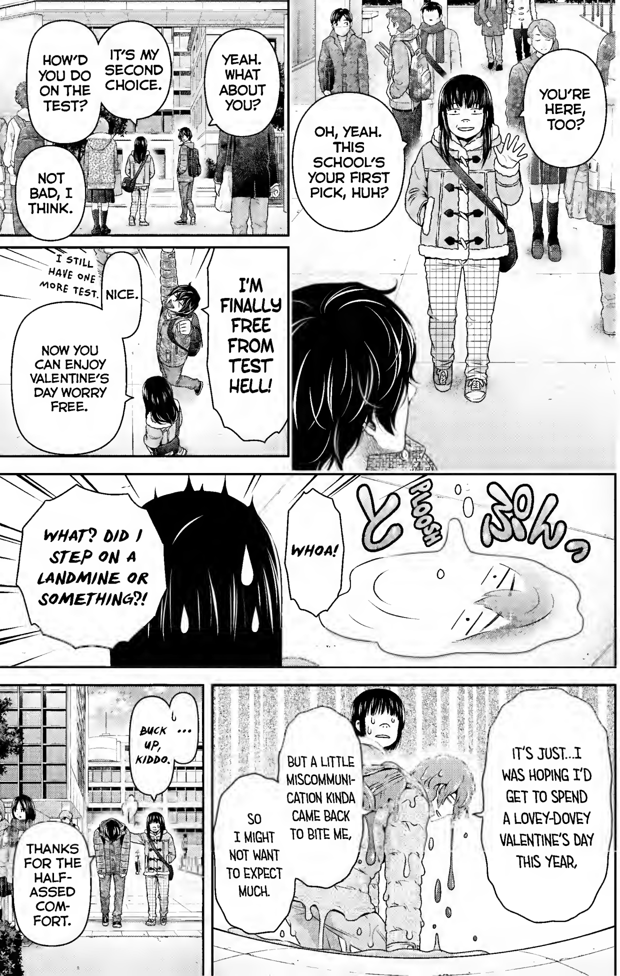

BESIDES, I HADN'T EVEN DECIDED FOR MYSELF...
...UNTIL RECENTLY.
IT'S NOT LIKE I NEVER WANTED TO TRY LIVING ON MY OWN,
I JUST FELT LIKE WHY BOTHER IF I DIDN'T NEED TO.
BUT ...
HINA-NEE'S COMING HOME IN SPRING, RIGHT?
THAT MEANS IT'S GONNA GET A LOT HARDER TO KEEP OUR RELATIONSHIP SOLID.
I'D RATHER MOVE OUT BEFORE ANYTHING TEARS US APART.
AND I'M SURE THINGS WON'T BE AS AWKWARD BETWEEN YOU AND HINA-NEE WITHOUT ME AROUND.
I GET WHAT YOU'RE SAYING,
BUT IT STILL MAKES ME SAD TO THINK THAT...
...I WON'T GET TO SEE YOU EVERY DAY.
WE CAN ALWAYS SKYPE,
AND WE'LL BE ABLE TO ACT LIKE A COUPLE WAY MORE ONCE I MOVE OUT.
OKAY ?

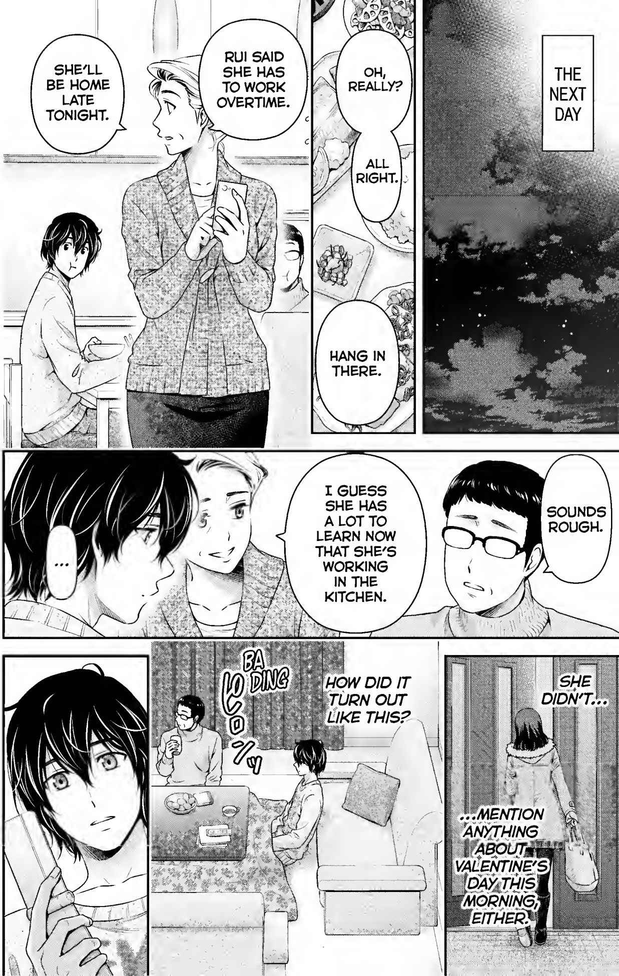

'KAY...
最上予備校
小中学部・高校部
SIGN: MOGAMI PREP SCHOOL
ELE-MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL DEP
2

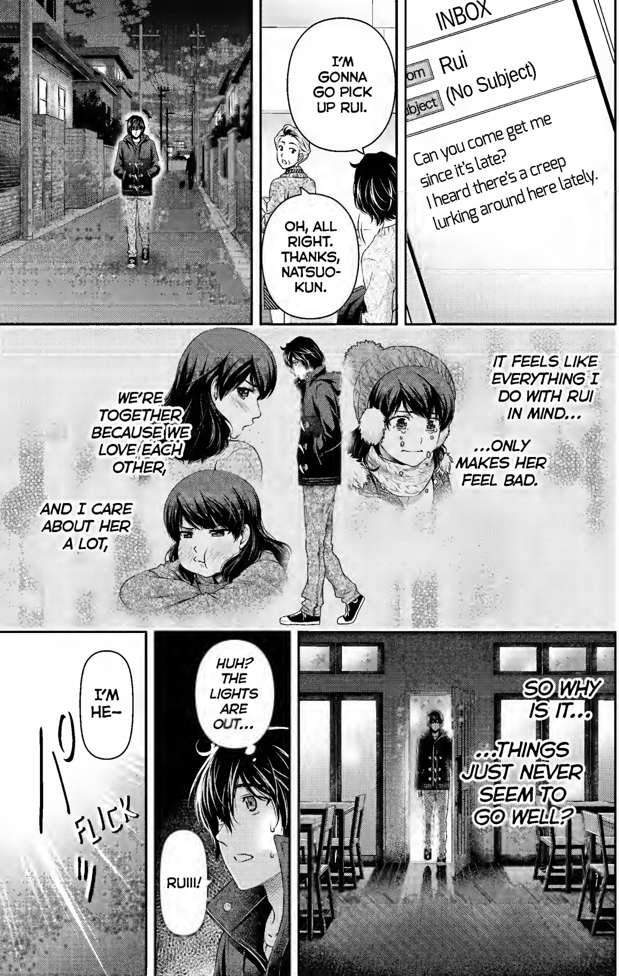

I'M TAKING OFF.
YOU'VE BEEN WORKING AN AWFUL LOT LATELY, RUI. WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL?
CLASS IS OPTIONAL FROM FEBRUARY ON.
OH, IS IT?
DONUT & DONUT ★ ★ ★ "Luck is in the hole"
I TOLD YOU BEFORE, REMEMBER?
RUI!
LET ME SEE YOUR HANDS!
THEY LOOK REALLY RED!
I THOUGHT SO... DID YOU BURN YOURSELF AT WORK?
YOU SHOULD RUB SOME OINTMENT ON THEM...
I'M FINE.
YEAH, RIGHT. JUST LOOK HOW RED–
I SAID I'M FINE!
SNAP
...!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT...
YOU KEPT QUIET BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T WANT ME TO WORRY, RIGHT?
WELL, I'M DOING THE SAME.


I DON'T WANT YOU TO WORRY OVER NOTHING.
IT'S REALLY NO BIG DEAL, SO JUST DROP IT!


12
13
Natsuo's Meiji University Exam
HEY!


YOU'RE HERE, TOO?
OH, YEAH. THIS SCHOOL'S YOUR FIRST PICK, HUH?
YEAH. WHAT ABOUT YOU?
IT'S MY SECOND CHOICE.
HOW'D YOU DO ON THE TEST?
NOT BAD, I THINK.
I'M FINALLY FREE FROM TEST HELL!
NICE.
I STILL HAVE ONE MORE TEST.
NOW YOU CAN ENJOY VALENTINE'S DAY WORRY FREE.
ぷんっ
PLOOSH
と
WHOA!
WHAT? DID I STEP ON A LANDMINE OR SOMETHING?!
IT'S JUST...I WAS HOPING I'D GET TO SPEND A LOVEY-DOVEY VALENTINE'S DAY THIS YEAR,
BUT A LITTLE MISCOMMUNICATION KINDA CAME BACK TO BITE ME,
SO I MIGHT NOT WANT TO EXPECT MUCH.
...
BUCK UP, KIDDO.
THANKS FOR THE HALF-ASSED COMFORT.


THE NEXT DAY
OH, REALLY?
ALL RIGHT.
HANG IN THERE.
RUI SAID SHE HAS TO WORK OVERTIME.
SHE'LL BE HOME LATE TONIGHT.
SOUNDS ROUGH.
I GUESS SHE HAS A LOT TO LEARN NOW THAT SHE'S WORKING IN THE KITCHEN.
...
SHE DIDN'T...
...MENTION ANYTHING ABOUT VALENTINE'S DAY THIS MORNING, EITHER.
HOW DID IT TURN OUT LIKE THIS?
BA DING



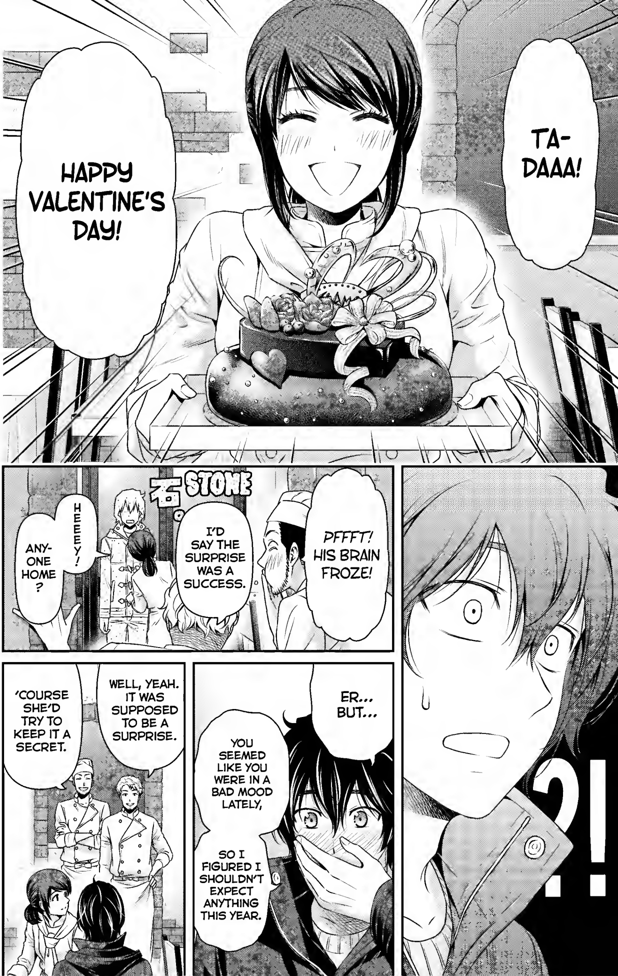
INBOX

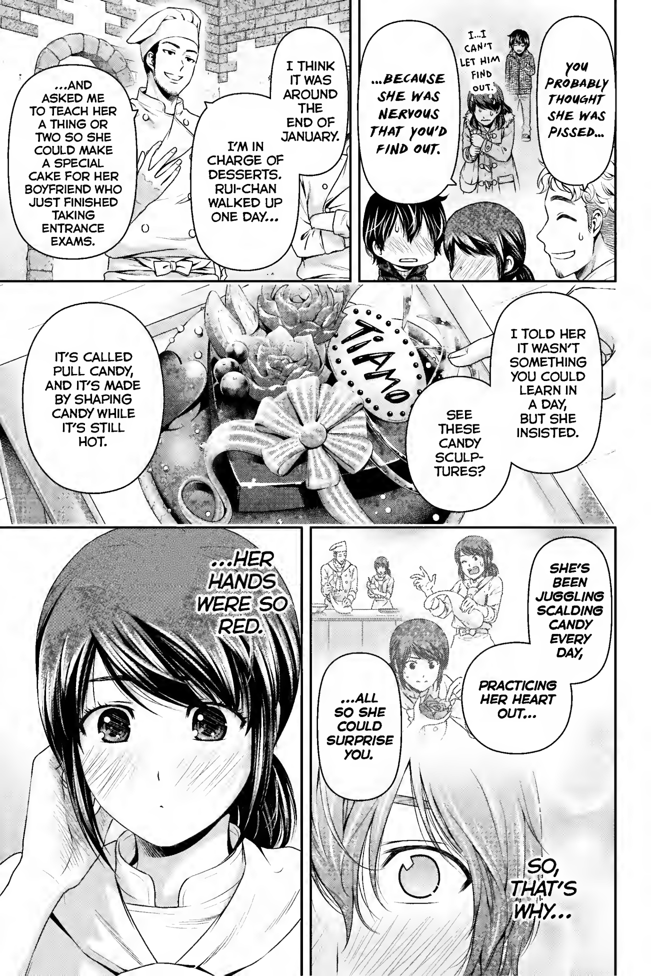
om Rui

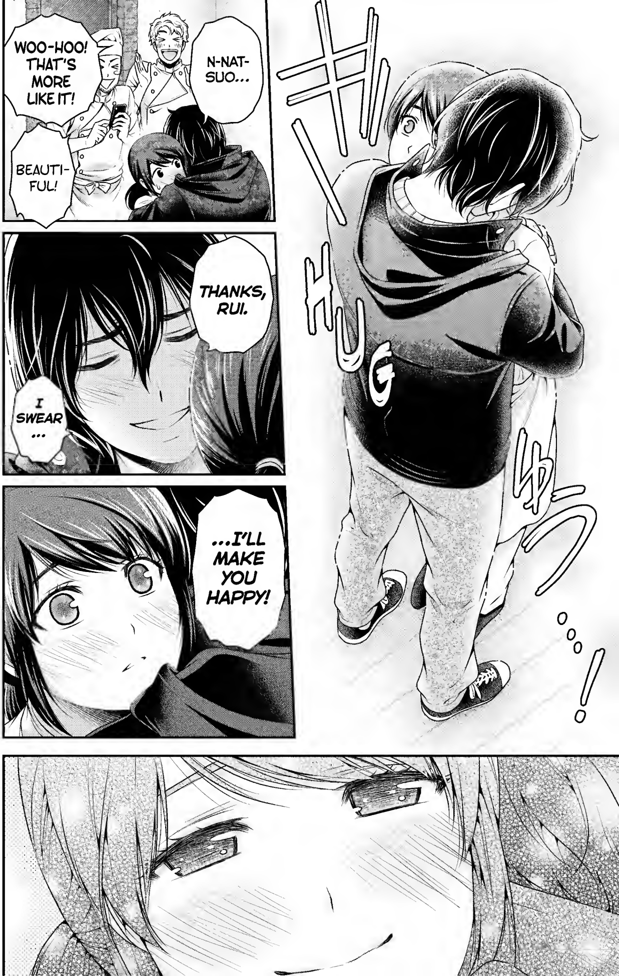
bject (No Subject)

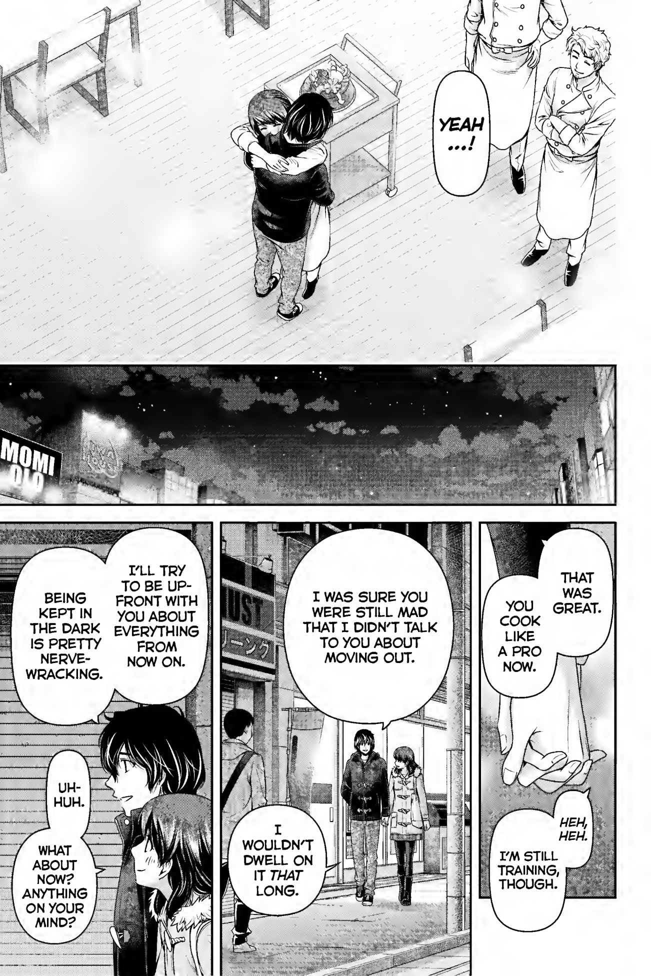
Can you come get me since it's late? I heard there's a creep lurking around here lately.

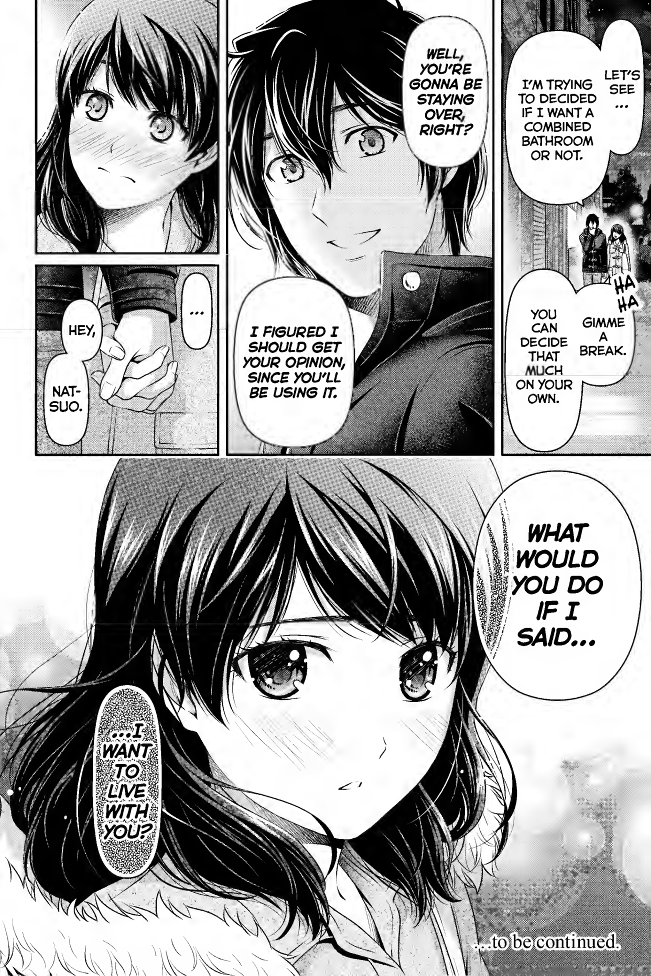
I'M GONNA GO PICK UP RUI.
OH, ALL RIGHT. THANKS, NATSUO-KUN.
IT FEELS LIKE EVERYTHING I DO WITH RUI IN MIND...
...ONLY MAKES HER FEEL BAD.
WE'RE TOGETHER BECAUSE WE LOVE EACH OTHER,
AND I CARE ABOUT HER A LOT,
SO WHY IS IT...
...THINGS JUST NEVER SEEM TO GO WELL?
HUH? THE LIGHTS ARE OUT...
RUIII!
I'M HE-
FLICK


TA-DAAA!
HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!
?!
PFFFT! HIS BRAIN FROZE!
I'D SAY THE SURPRISE WAS A SUCCESS.
石 STONE
HEEEY!
ANYONE HOME?
ER... BUT...
YOU SEEMED LIKE YOU WERE IN A BAD MOOD LATELY,
SO I FIGURED I SHOULDN'T EXPECT ANYTHING THIS YEAR.
WELL, YEAH. IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A SURPRISE.
'COURSE SHE'D TRY TO KEEP IT A SECRET.


YOU PROBABLY THOUGHT SHE WAS PISSED...
I...I CAN'T LET HIM FIND OUT.
...BECAUSE SHE WAS NERVOUS THAT YOU'D FIND OUT.
I THINK IT WAS AROUND THE END OF JANUARY.
I'M IN CHARGE OF DESSERTS. RUI-CHAN WALKED UP ONE DAY...
...AND ASKED ME TO TEACH HER A THING OR TWO SO SHE COULD MAKE A SPECIAL CAKE FOR HER BOYFRIEND WHO JUST FINISHED TAKING ENTRANCE EXAMS.
I TOLD HER IT WASN'T SOMETHING YOU COULD LEARN IN A DAY, BUT SHE INSISTED.
SEE THESE CANDY SCULPTURES?
TI AMO
IT'S CALLED PULL CANDY, AND IT'S MADE BY SHAPING CANDY WHILE IT'S STILL HOT.
SHE'S BEEN JUGGLING SCALDING CANDY EVERY DAY,
PRACTICING HER HEART OUT...
...ALL SO SHE COULD SURPRISE YOU.
SO, THAT'S WHY...
...HER HANDS WERE SO RED.


ギュ
HUG
ゅう
...!
N-NAT-SUO...
WOO-HOO! THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!
BEAUTI-FUL!
THANKS, RUI.
I SWEAR...
...I'LL MAKE YOU HAPPY!


YEAH ...!
MOMI
THAT WAS GREAT.
YOU COOK LIKE A PRO NOW.
HEH, HEH.
I'M STILL TRAINING, THOUGH.
I WAS SURE YOU WERE STILL MAD THAT I DIDN'T TALK TO YOU ABOUT MOVING OUT.
I WOULDN'T DWELL ON IT *THAT* LONG.
I'LL TRY TO BE UP-FRONT WITH YOU ABOUT EVERYTHING FROM NOW ON.
BEING KEPT IN THE DARK IS PRETTY NERVE-WRACKING.
UH-HUH.
WHAT ABOUT NOW? ANYTHING ON YOUR MIND?


LET'S SEE ...
I'M TRYING TO DECIDED IF I WANT A COMBINED BATHROOM OR NOT.
HA HA
GIMME A BREAK.
YOU CAN DECIDE THAT MUCH ON YOUR OWN.
WELL, YOU'RE GONNA BE STAYING OVER, RIGHT?
I FIGURED I SHOULD GET YOUR OPINION, SINCE YOU'LL BE USING IT.
...
HEY,
NATSUO.
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF I SAID...
...I WANT TO LIVE WITH YOU?
...to be continued.